WAMI VIVEKANANDA

ON

HIMSELF

II VIVEKANANDA CENTENARY
CALCUTTA

PREFACE

Swami Vivekananda was born in Calcutta on the 12th of January, 1863 and peacefully passed away on July 4, 1902 in the Monastery at Belur Math near Calcutta. After remaining an unknown figure for nearly thirty years of his life he emerged as a World Teacher in the true sense of the term and blessed innumerable souls all over the globe.

It was on January 27, 1900 during his second visit to America that Swami Vivekananda delivered to the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena, California, somewhat reluctantly a touching account of "My life and Mission". In it the Swami naturally gave out very little of his great and eventful life. Fortunately for us however, we are able to gather a fund of information about his life and work in the East and the West from the large number of his letters to his disciples, friends and admirers in both the Hemispheres as also from a few other very reliable sources.

In fact the present book is a documentation of selected notes and utterances of Swamiji about himself and his work collected from the books mentioned below. These are arranged chronologically so as to form what may be called a near autobiography of the great Saint. And for this very important work we are much indebted to a Swami of the Ramakrishna Order, who prefers to remain anonymous. The original manuscript prepared by him was the product of patient labour for a long period and it was passed on to a senior Swami of the Bombay Ashrama who jointly with Prof. Charu Chandra Chatterjee went through the manuscript, weighing and judging the passages, collating and comparing them with the

5 The life of Swami Vivekananda by His Eastern and Western disciples (Published by the Advaita Ashrama Calcutta 14)

6. New Discoveries – Swami Vivekananda in America (published by Advaita Ashram, Calcutta 14)

This selected compilation, which includes Swamiji's own words about his beloved Guru Sri Ramakrishna, we believe will be a highly valuable and handy document and will remain a source of inspiration to the coming generation.

Publisher

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CHAPTER I

BIRTH AND BOYHOOD

The present writer is an insignificant servant of Sri Ramakrishna. I am not ashamed of my race, or my birth or nationality. I am proud of my race, proud of my ancestors, I am proud to call myself a Hindu. It has been one of the principles of my life not to be ashamed of my own ancestors. I am one of the proudest men ever born, but let me tell you frankly, it is not for myself, but on acccount of my ancestry. The more I have studied the past, the more I have looked back, more and more has this pride come to me and it has given me the strength and courage of conviction, raised me up from the dust of the earth and set me working out the great plan laid out by those great ancestors of ours.

My father and mother fasted and prayed for years and years, so that I would be born.

I have such a memory when I was only two years old I used to play with my syce, at being a *Vairagi*, clothed in ashes and *Kaupina*. And if a Sadhu came to beg, they would lock me in upstairs to prevent my giving too much away. I felt that for some mischief, I had had to be sent away from Siva. No doubt my family increased this feeling, for when I was naughty they would say "Dear, dear, so many austerities, yet Siva sent us this demon after all, instead of a good soul!" Or when I was very rebellious, they would empty a can of water over me, saying Siva! Siva! and then I was all right. Always, even now, when I feel mischievous, those words keep me straight.

When I was a little boy at school, I had a fight with another fellow about some sweetmeats, and he being the stronger boy, snatched them from my hand I remember the feeling I had, I thought that boy was the most wicked boy ever born, and that as soon as I grew strong enough I would punish him. There was no punishment sufficient for his wickedness We have both grown up now and we are fast friends This world is full of babies to whom eating and drinking and all these little cakes are everything. They will dream of these cakes, and their idea of future life is where these cakes will be plentiful.

What I saw and felt (on my way to Raipur in 1877)* when going through the forest, has for ever remained firmly imprinted on my memory, particularly one event of one day We had to travel by the foot of the Vindhya mountains of high peaks on that day The peaks of the Ranges on both sides of the road were very high in the sky, bending under the weight of fruits and flowers Various kinds of trees and creepers produced wonderful beauty on the sides of the mountains, birds of various colours flying from arbour to arbour or down on the ground in search of food, filled the quarters with sweet

*In the year 1877, while Vivekananda (then Naren) was a student of third class, his father went to Raipur in the Central Provinces (Madhya Pradesh) He arranged that this family should follow him later on led by Naren It was a journey partly by bullock cart via Allahabad and Jubbulpore through dense forests and over unfrequented roads, for the railways were in those days constructed only upto Nagpur.

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)

notes. I saw all these and felt an extraordinary peace my mind. The slowly moving bullock cart arrived at a place where two mountain peaks coming forward as in love, locked themselves up in an embrace over the narrow forest path Observing carefully below the meeting points, I saw that there was a very big cleft from the crest to the foot of this mountain on one side of the path, and filling that cleft, there was hanging on it an enormous honeycomb, the result of the bees' labour for ages Filled with wonder, as I was pondering over the beginning and the end of that kingdom of bees, my mind became so much absorbed in the thought of the infinite power of God, the Controller of the three worlds, that I completly lost my consciousness of the external world for some time. I do not remember how long I lay in the bullock cart in that condition. When I regained external consciousness, I found that we had crossed that place and come far away. As I was alone in the cart, no one could know anything about it

We cannot deny that there is much misery in the world, to go out and help others is, therefore, the best thing we can do, although in the long run we shall find that helping others is only helping ourselves As a boy I had some white mice They were kept in a little box which had little wheels made for them, and when the mice tried to cross the wheels, the wheels turned and turned, and the mice never got anywhere. So it is with the world and our helping it. The only help is that we get moral exercise

When he (my tutor) came to our house, I brought my English and Bengali Books to him and showing him

which part of which books were to be learnt that day. I lay or sat freely. The teacher repeated twice or thrice the spelling, pronunciation, meaning etc. of the words of those portions of the books, as if he was himself learning his own lesson and went away. That was sufficient for me to learn them.

Even while I was a student at Calcutta, I was of a religious temperament. I was critical even at that time of my life, mere words would not satisfy me.

I used to see all my life a wonderful point of light between my eyebrows as soon as I would shut my eyes in order to go to sleep, and observe attentively its various changes In order that it might be convenient to see it, I used to lie on my bed in the way people bow down touching the ground with their foreheads. That extraordinary point used to change its colours, and increasing in size, become gradually converted into the form of a ball, and bursting at last, cover my body from head to foot with white liquid light. As soon as that happened, I lost external conciousness and fell asleep. I believed that all people went to sleep that way. I was long under that impression.

When I grew up and began to practise meditation, that point of light used to come before me, first of all, as soon as I closed my eyes, and I concentrated my mind on it. In those days I daily practised meditation with a few friends according to the instruction of Maharshi Devendranath. We talked among ourselves about the nature of visions and experiences each of us had. At that time I came to know from what they said that they never had

the vision of such light and that none of them went to sleep in that way.

From my very boyhood I was a dare-devil sort of fellow Otherwise do you think I could make a tour round the world without a single copper in my pocket?

While at school, one night I was meditating within closed doors and had a fairly deep concentration of mind. How long I meditated in that way, I cannot say.

It was over, and I still kept my seat, when from the southern wall of our room a luminous figure stepped out and stood in front of me There was a wonderful radiance on its visage, yet there seemed to be no play of emotion on it. It was the figure of a sanyasin absolutely calm, shaven headed, and staff and kamandalu (a sanyasin's wooden water-bowl) in hand. He gazed at me for some time, and seemed as if he would address me. I too gazed at him in speechless wonder. Then a kind of fright seized me I opened the door and hurried out of the room. Then it struck me that it was foolish of me to run away like that, and that perhaps he might say something to me. But I have never met that figure since. Many a time and often have I thought if I could again see him, I would no more be afraid but would speak to him. But I met him no more; I could find no clue to its solution. It was the lord Buddha whom I saw Lord Buddha is my Ishtam, my God. He preached no theory but Godhead; he was himself God. I fully believe it. All my life I have been very fond of Buddha. I have more veneration for that character than for any other. Of course, I do not endorse all his philosophy. I want a good deal of metaphysics for

myself I entirely differ in many respects, but becaus differ, is that any reason why I should not see the bea of the man? I wish I had one infinitesimal part Buddha's heart Buddha may or may not have believed God, that does not matter to me He reached the sa state of perfection to which others come by Bhakti, lo of God, Yoga or Jnana

I am not a Buddhist, and yet I am

From my very boyhood, whenever I came in conta with a particular object, man or place, it would sometim appear to me as if I had been acquainted with it befor hand But all my efforts to recollect were unsuccessfu and yet the impression persisted I will give you an i stance One day I was discussing various topics with m friends at a particular place Suddenly something w said which at once reminded me that in some time past i this very house I had talked with these friends on tha very subject and that the discussion had even taken th same turn Later on I thought that it might be due t the law of transmigration But soon I decided that such definite conclusions on the subject were not reasonable Now I believe that before I was born I must have ha visions somehow of those subjects and people with whom I would have to come in contact in my present birth That memory comes, every now then, before me through out my whole life.

Just two or three days before the Entrance examination I found that I hardly knew anything of geometry. Then I began to study the subject keeping awake for the

whole night and in course of twenty four hours I mastered the four books of geometry

It so happened that I could understand an author without reading his book line by line I could get the meaning by just reading the first and the last line of a paragraph As this power developed I found it unnecessary to read even the paragraphs. I could follow by reading only the first and last lines of the page.

Further, where the author introduced a discussion to explain a matter and it took him four or five or even more pages to clear the subject, I could grasp the whole trend of his arguments by only reading the first few lines

I remember that the year I graduated, several girls came out and graduated—the same standard, the same course, the same in everything as the boys, and they did very well indeed.

I studied hard for twelve years, and became a graduate of the Calcutta University.

All of us have heard of extraordinary happenings, many of us have had some personal experience of them. I would tell you certain facts which have come within my own experience.

I once heard of a man who, if any one went to him with questions in his mind, could answer them immediately, and I was also informed that he foretold events. I was curious and went to see him with a few friends. We each had something in our minds to ask, and to avoid mistakes, we wrote down our questions and put them in our pockets.

As soon as the man saw one of us, he repeated our questions and gave the answers to them. Then he wrote something on paper which he folded up, asked me to sign on the back and said, "Don't look at it. Put it in your pocket and keep it till I ask for that again." And so to each one of us. He next told us some events that would happen to us in future. Then he said, "Now think of a word or sentence from any language you like." I thought of a long sentence from Sanskrit, a language of which he was entirely ignorant. "Now take out the paper from your pocket," he said. The Sanskrit sentence was written there! He had written it an hour before with the remark, "In confirmation of what I have written, this man will think of this sentence". It was correct. Another of us who had been given a similar paper which he had signed and placed in his pocket, was also asked to think of a sentence. He thought of a sentence in Arabic, which it was less possible for the man to know; it was some passage from the Koran. And my friend found this written down on the paper! Another of us was a physician. He thought of a sentence from a German medical book. It was written on his paper. Several days later I went to this man again, thinking possibly I had been deluded somehow before. I took other friends and on this occasion also he came out wonderfully triumphant.

As soon as I went to bed, two ideals appeared before me every night since I had reached my youth. One vision presented me as a person of endless wealth and property, innumerable servants and dependants, high rank and dignity, great pomp and power and I thought I was seated at

the head of those who were called big men in the world. I felt I certainly had that power in me Again, the next moment, I felt as if I had renounced everything of the world and putting on a loin cloth, eating whatever was available without effort and spending nights under trees, depending upon ~~the~~ God's will only, I was leading my life. I felt I could live the life of Rishis and Munis if I would

These two pictures, according to which I could mould my life in two different ways, thus arose in my mind But the latter would grip the mind in the end I thought that in this way alone man could attain real bliss and that I would follow this path and not the other Brooding on the happiness of such a life, my mind would then merge in the contemplation of God and I would fall asleep It is a matter of astonishment that it happened to me, every night for a long time.

I never terrified children by speaking of hobgoblins as I was afraid of uttering a falsehood, and scolded all whom I saw doing it. As the result of English education and my frequenting the Brahmo Samaj, the devotion to verbal expression of truth had increased so much then.

At the beginning of this century (19th) it was almost feared that religion was at an end Under the tremendous sledge-hammer blows of scientific research, old superstitions were crumbling away like masses of porcelain. Those to whom religion meant only a bundle of creeds and meaningless ceremonials were in despair; they were at their wit's end. Everything was slipping between their fingers. For a time it seemed inevitable that the

surging tide of agnosticism and materialism would sweep all before it When I was a boy, this scepticism reached me, and it seemed for a time as if I must give up all hopes of religion But, fortunately for me I studied the Christian religion, the Mohammedan, the Buddhist and others, and what was my surprise to find was that the same fundamental principles taught by my religion were also taught by all religions It appealed to me this way ' What is the truth" I asked

When I was a boy here, in the city of Calcutta, I used to go from place to place in search of religion, and everywhere I asked the lecturer after hearing very big lectures, "Have you seen God?" The man was taken aback at the idea of seeing God and the only man who told me "I have' was Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, and not only so, but he said "I will put you on the way of seeing Him too"

Sri Ramkrishna was the son of a very orthodox Brahmin, who would refuse even a gift from any but a special caste of Brahmins

Owing to the extreme poverty of his family Sri Ramakrishna was obliged to become in his boyhood a priest in a temple dedicated to the Divine Mother, also called Prakriti or Kali, represented by a female figure standing with feet on a male figure, indicating that until Maya lifts, we can know nothing ......

The daily service of the Mother Kali gradually awakened such intense devotion in the heart of the young priest that he could no longer carry on the regular temple

worship, so he abandoned his duties and retired to a small woodland in the temple compound, where he gave himself up entirely to meditation These woods were on the bank of the Ganges and one day the swift current carried to his very feet just the necessary materials to build him a little hut. In this he stayed and wept and prayed, taking no thought for the care of his body or for aught except his Divine Mother. A relative fed him once a day and watched over him Later came a ~~woman~~ Sanyasini or ascetic to help him find his 'Mother". Whatever teachers he needed came to him unsought From every sect some old saint would come and offer to teach him and to each he listened eagerly But he worshipped only Mother. All to him was Mother

He is born to no purpose, who, having the privilege of being born a man is unable to realise God in this life

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Each soul is potentially divine The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature external and internal.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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That day I sang two songs He went into Samadhi H
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People came by thousands to see and hear thi
wonderful man who spoke in patois, every word of whicl
was forceful and instinct with light. This man came to
live near Calcutta, the Capital of India, the most import
ant University town in our country, which was sending
out sceptics and materialists by the hundreds every year
Yet many of these University men, sceptics and agnostics,
used to come and listen to him I heard of this man and
I went to hear him He looked just like an ordinary man,
with nothing remarkable about him.

Well, I sang the song, but shortly after, he suddenly
rose and taking me by the hand led me to the northern
verandah, shutting the door behind him It was locked
from the outside, so we were alone I thought he would
give me some private instructions. But to my utter sur-
prise he began to shed profuse tears of joy as he held my
hand, and addressing me most tenderly as one long fami-
liar to him, said "Ah, you come so late! How could you
... My ears are
... es of worldly
... mind to one

who can appreciate my innermost experience!" Thus he went on amid sobs. The next moment he stood before me with folded hands and began to address me, "Lord, I know that you are that ancient Sage, Nara, the Incarnation of Narayana - born on earth to remove the miseries of Mankind" and so on!

I was altogether taken aback by his conduct "Who is this man whom I have come to see?" I thought, "he must be stark mad Why, I am but the son of Vishwanatha Dutta *and yet he dares to address me thus!*" But I kept quiet allowing him to go on Presently he went back to his room, and bringing some sweets, sugar-candy and butter, began to feed me with his own hands. In vain did I say again and again, "Please give the sweets to me I shall share them with my friends!". He simply said, "They may have some afterwards," and desisted only after I had eaten all Then he seized me by the hand and said, "Promise that you will come alone to me at an early date." At his importunity I had to say "Yes", and returned with him to my friends

I sat and watched him. There was nothing wrong in his words, movements or behaviour towards others. Rather from his spiritual words and ecstatic states, he seemed to be a man of genuine renunciation, and there was a marked consistency between his words and life. He used the most simple language, and I thought, "Can this man be a great teacher?" I crept near him and asked him the question which I had asked so often, - "Have you seen God Sir?" "Yes, I see him just as I see you here, only in a much intenser sense" "God can be

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People came by thousands to see and hear thi wonderful man, who spoke in patois, every word of which was forceful and instinct with light. This man came to live near Calcutta, the Capital of India, the most important University town in our country, which was sending out sceptics and materialists by the hundreds every year Yet many of these University men, sceptics and agnostics used to come and listen to him I heard of this man and I went to hear him. He looked just like an ordinary man, with nothing remarkable about him

Well, I sang the song, but shortly after, he suddenly rose and taking me by the hand led ' orthern verandah, shutting the door be from the outside; so we were a give me some private instr prise he began to shed hand, and addressing me liar to him, said "Ah, be so unkind as to well-nigh b people. Oh,

But I did not know anything of this I was sound asleep in our Calcutta house.

I did not realise then that the temple garden of Dakshineshwar was so far from Calcutta, as on the previous occasion I had gone there in a carriage The road seemed to be so long as to be almost endless. However, I reached the garden somehow, and went straight to Sri Ramkrishna's room. I found him sitting alone on the bedstead. He was glad to see me and calling me affectionately to his side, made me sit beside him on his bed. But the next moment I found him overcome with a sort of emotion. Muttering something to himself, with his eyes fixed on me, he slowly drew near me. I thought he might do something queer as on the previous occasion. But in the twinkling of an eye he placed his right foot on my body The touch at once gave rise to a novel experience within me With my eyes open I saw that the walls and everything in the room, whirled rapidly and vanished into naught and the whole Universe together with my individuality was about to merge in an all-encompassing mysterious void! I was terribly frightened and thought that I was facing death, for the loss of individuality meant nothing short of that Unable to control myself I cried out, "What is it that you are doing to me, - I have my parents at home." He laughed at this and stroking my chest said, "All right, let it rest now. Everything will come in time." The wonder of it was that no sooner he had said this than that strange experience of mine vanished. I was myself again and found everything within and without the room as it had been before.

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All this happened in less time than it takes me narrate it, but it revolutionised my mind. Amazed thought, "What could it possibly be? It came and we at the mere wish of this wonderful man". I began question if it were mesmerism or hypnotism. But th was not likely, for these acted only on weak minds, and prided myself on being just the reverse. I had n as yet surrendered myself to the stronger personality the man, rather I had taken him to be a monomaniac. S to what might this sudden transformation of mine be due I could not come to any conclusion. It was an enigma, thought, which I had better not attempt to solve. I wa determined, however, to be on my guard and not to giv him another chance to exert similar influence over me.

The next moment I thought how can a man wh shatters to pieces a resolute and strong mind like mine b dismissed as a lunatic? Yet that was just the conclusion at which one would arrive from his effusiveness on ou first meeting, unless he was an Incarnation of God, which was indeed a far cry. So, I was in dilemma about the rea nature of my experience as well as the truth about thi remarkable man, who was obviously pure and simple as a child. My rationalistic mind received an unpleasant rebuff at this failure in judging the true state of things. But I was determined to fathom this mystery somehow.

Thoughts like these occupied my mind during the whole of that day. But he became quite another man after that incident, and as on the previous occasion treated me with great kindness and cordiality. His behaviour towards me was like that of a man who meets an old

friend or relative after a long separation He seemed not to be satisfied with entertaining and taking all possible care of me. This remarkably loving treatment drew me all the more to him At last, finding that the day was coming to a close, I asked his leave to go He seemed very much dejected at this and gave me his permission only after I had promised to come again at my earliest convenience.

One day in the temple garden of Dakshineshwar, Sri Ramakrishna touched me over the heart, and first of all I began to see that the houses, rooms, doors, windows, verandahs, the trees, the sun, the moon, all were flying off, shattering to pieces as it were, reduced to atoms and molecules, and ultimately became merged in the *Akasha* Gradually again, the *Akasha* also vanished, and after that my consciousness of the ego with it, what happened next I do not recollect I was at first frightened. Coming from that state, again I began to see the houses, doors, windows, verandahs, and other things On another occasion I had exactly the same realisation by the side of a lake in America.

How can you call this a derangement of the brain! when it comes neither as the result of delirium from any disease nor as an illusion produced by various sorts of queer breathing exercises, - but when it comes to a normal man in full possession of his health and wits? Then again, this experience is in perfect harmony with the Vedas It also coincides with the words of realisation of the inspired Rishis and Acharyas of old. Do you take me, at last, to be a crack-brained man?.

This knowledge of oneness is what the Sastras speak of as realisation of the Brahman, by knowing which, one gets rid of fear, and the shackles of birth and death break for ever. Having once realised that supreme bliss one is no more overwhelmed by pleasure and pain of this world.

That supreme bliss fully exists in all, from Brahma down to the blade of grass. Being again and again entangled in the intricate maze of delusion and hard hit by sorrows and afflictions, the eye will turn of itself to one's own real nature, the inner self. It is owing to the presence of this desire for bliss in the heart, that man getting hard shocks one after another, turns his eyes inwards - to his own self. A time is sure to come to everyone, without exception, when he will do so, to one it may be in this life, to another, after thousands of incarnations.

I did not hesitate to use harsh words for his (Sri Ramakrishna's) blind love for me. I used to warn him saying that if he constantly thought of me he would become like me. - Just like king Bharatha of the old legend, who so doted upon his pet deer that even at the time of death he was unable to think of anything else, and, as a result, was born as a deer in his next life. At these words, Sri Ramakrishna, so simple was he, became very nervous, and said, "What you say is quite true, what is to become of me, for I cannot bear to be separated from you". Sadly dejected, he went to the Kali Temple, whence he returned in a few minutes smiling and said, "You rogue, I would not listen to you any *more.* Mother says I love you because I see the Lord in you, and the day I shall no longer do so, I shall not be

able to bear even the sight of you". By this short and emphatic statement he dismissed once for all everything that I had ever said to him on the subject.

One day he said to me, "You can see Krishna in your heart if you want " I replied, "I don't believe in Krishna or any such nonsense!". Once I said to him, "The form of God and things like that which you see in your visions are all figments of your imagination" He had so much faith in my words that he went to the Divine Mother in the Temple and told Her what I had said to him He asked Her, "Are these hallucinations then?" Afterwards he said to me, "Mother told me that all these are real".

Again, he said to me, "When you sing, He who dwells here (touching his heart) like a snake, hisses as it were, and then spreading the hood, quietly hold himself steady and listens to your music '

He has no doubt said many things about me

And how can Sri Ramakrishna's words prove false?

We (Sri Ramakrishna and I) talked of our revealed book, the Vedas, of the Bible, of the Quoran and of the revealed books in general At the close of our talk this good man asked me to go to the shelf and take up a book. It was a book which, among other things, contained a forecast of the rainfall during the year. The sage said, "Read that". And I read out the quantity of rain that was to fall. He said, "Now take the book and squeeze it". I did so and he said, "Why my boy, not a drop of water comes out. Until the water comes out it is all a book, book. So until your religion makes you

realise God, it is useless He who studies books only for religion reminds one of the fable of the ass which carried a heavy load of sugar on its back but did not know the sweetness of it."

I did not believe in anything At first I did not accept most of what the Master said One day he asked me, "Then, why do you come here?" I replied, "I come here to see you, not to listen to you". He was very much pleased

One day when I was alone with him, he said something to me. Nobody else was present He said, "It is not possible for me to exercise occult powers, but I shall do so through you What do you say?" "No", I replied "you can't do that!"

I used to laugh at his words I told him that his vision of God was all hallucination of his mind.

He said to me, "I used to climb to the roof of the Kuthi, and cry, "O, Devotees where are you all? come to me; O! Devotees, I am about to die. I shall certainly die if I do not see you And the Divine Mother told me, 'The devotees will come'. You see everything is turning out to be true." What else could I say? I kept quiet

I used to follow my own whim in every thing I did. The Master never interfered I became a member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.

The master knew that women attended the meeting of the Brahmo *Samaj* A man cannot meditate with women sitting in front of him, therefore he criticised the

meditation of the Brahmo Samaj. But he didn't object to my going there. But one day he said to me, "Don't tell Rakhal about your being a member of the Brahmo Samaj, or he too will feel like becoming one."

I had connection with Pandit Shivanath Shastry's Party but only on points of social reform. Of course in religious matters even with my friend Punditji, I differed much, -the chief being, I thinking Sanyasa or giving up the world as the highest ideal and he a sin. So the Brahmo Samajists consider becoming a monk a sin!

I never identified myself any way with Mr Mazumdar's party-chief (Keshab Chandra Sen), former leader of the Brahmo Samaj. If he says so, he does not speak the truth.

When I found that the master did not bestow that kind of grace on them (my friends) which he had done on me by accepting me and instructing me in religion, I used to ask him importunately to bestow it on them. On account of boyish frivolity, I became ready on many occasions to argue with him. I said, "Why Sir, God is indeed never so partial that He will bestow His grace on some and not on others. Why should you then not accept them as you have done me?. Is it not certain that one can attain spirituality and realise God if one wills and makes an effort just as one can become a learned Pandit if he puts forth an effort? The Master replied, "What can I do my child? Mother shows me that there is the beastly mental attitude of a bull in them; they cannot realise spirituality in this life. What can I

do? and what is it you say? Can anyone become wh
one wishes to in this life by mere will and effort?" I
who lent an ear to the Master's words then? I sa
"What do you say, Sir? Can't one become what o
wishes to, if one wills and makes efforts? Surely one ca
I cannot believe what you say about it " At that al
the Master said the same thing, "Whether you belie
it or not, Mother shows me that " I never accept
then what he said But the more time passed on, t
more did I understand from experience that what th
master said was right, and what I thought was wron

One day as soon as I went to Dakshineshwar, th
Master gave me those books (on non-dualism) to rea
which he forbade others to. Amongst other books,
copy of Ashtavakra Samhita was in his room. Whe
the master found anyone reading that book he wou
forbid him to do so and would give him instead suc
books as "Mukti and how to attain it," "The Bhagav
Gita," or some Purana. But scarcely had I gone to hi
when he took out the book and asked me to read it Or, h
would ask me to read some part of Adhyatma Ramayan
which was full of non-dualistic ideas. I said, and some
times in an outspoken way, "What is the use of readin
this book? It is a sin even to think 'I am God': the boo
teaches the same blasphemy. It should be burnt". Th
Master smiled and said, "Do I ask you to read it f
yourself? I ask you to read a little to me. Please do i
That being the case, you will not have to think that yo
are God". So, I had to read a little for him at hi
request.

This magic touch of the Master that day immediately brought a wonderful change over my mind I was stupified to find that really there was nothing in the Universe but God! I saw it quite clearly but kept silent to see if the idea would last But the impression did not abate in the course of the day I returned home, but there too everything I saw appeared to be Brahman. I sat down to take my meal, but found that everything the food, the plate, the person who served and even myself was nothing but That I ate a morsel or two and sat still I was startled by my mother's words, "Why do you sit still? - finish your meal," and I began to eat again. But all the while whether eating or lying down or going to college, I had the same experience and felt myself always in a sort of comatose state While walking in the streets, I noticed cabs plying, but I did not feel inclined to move out of the way I felt that the cabs and myself were of one stuff There was no sensation in my limbs which I thought were getting paralysed. I did not relish eating, and felt as if somebody else were eating Sometimes I lay down during a meal and after a few minutes got up and again began to eat The result was that on some days I would take too much, but it did me no harm. My mother became alarmed and said that there must be something wrong with me She was afraid that I might not live long When the above state altered a little, the world began to appear to me as a dream While walking in cornwallis Square, I would strike my head against the iron railings to see if they were real or only a dream. This state of thing continued for some days. When I became normal again I realised

that I must have had a glimpse of the Advaita State Then it struck me that the words of the scriptures were not false. Thenceforth I could not deny the conclusions of the Advaita Philosophy

For the first time I found a man who dared to say that he saw God, that religion was a reality, to be felt, to be sensed in an infinitely more intense way than we can sense the world I began to go to that man, day after day, and I actually saw that religion could be given. One touch, one glance, can change a whole life. I have read about Buddha and Christ and Mohammed, about all those different luminaries of ancient times, how they would stand up and say, "Be thou whole," and the man became whole. I now find it to be true and when I myself saw this man, all scepticism was brushed aside. It could be done and my master used to say, "Religion can be given and taken more tangibly, more really than anything else in the world"

The second idea that I learned from my master, and which is perhaps the most vital, is the wonderful truth that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic, they are but various phases of one Eternal Religion; that one Eternal Religion, as applied to different planes of existence is applied to the opinions of various minds and various races

In the presence of my master I found out that man could be perfect even in this body.

Devotion as taught by Narada, he used to preach to the masses, those who were incapable of any higher

training He used generally to teach dualism. As a rule, he never taught Advaitism. But he taught it to me. I had been a Dualist before.

Sri Ramakrishna once told me that not one in twenty millions in this world believe in God I asked him why, and he told me "Suppose there is a thief in th room and he gets to know that there is a mass of gold the next room, and only a very thin partition betwe the rooms, what will be the condition of that thief"? answered, "he will not be able to sleep at all His bra will be *actively* thinking of some means of *getting at* t gold and he will think of nothing else". Then he repli "Do you believe that a man could believe in God a not go mad with Him? If a man sincerely believes th there is that immense, infinite mine of bliss, and that can be reached, would not that man go mad in l struggles to reach it? Strong faith in God and the co sequent eagerness to reach Him constitute *Sraddh*

One day at that time I spent a night with the Ma ter at Dakshineshwar. I was sitting quiet for some ti under the Panchavati, when the Master suddenly ca there and catching hold of my hand, said smiling. "Yo intellect and learning will be examined today; you ha passed two and a half examinations* only A teacher w has passed three and a half has come today Come, me see how you fare in conversation with him" *Nol*

* Narendranath was then studying for his BA Examination Sri M, had passed that examination and was studying I (BL). The Master put these facts in that way

Volens, I had to go with the Master. When I reached his room and was introduced to M. (Mahendra Nath Gupta) I began to talk with him on various subjects. Having thus engaged us in a talk, the Master sat silent and went on listening to our words and observing us Afterwards, when Sri M. took leave and went away, he said, "What matters it, even if he has passed those examinations? The teacher is womanish in charcater-shy. He cannot talk with emphasis" Thus putting me against others, the Master enjoyed the fun

I might not have gained anything else by this practice of religion (shortly after I had met the Master), but it is certain that I have gained control over my terrible anger by His grace. Formerly I used to lose all control over myself in rage and was seized with repentance afterwards. But, now if anyone does me a great harm or even beats me severely, I don't become so very angry.

One day during one of my early visits, the Master in an ecstatic mood said to me, "You have come!" "How amazing", I said to myself, "it is as if he had known me for a long time" Then he said to me, "Do you ever see light"? I replied, "Yes, Sir, before I fall asleep I feel mething like a light revolving near my forehead "

I used to see it frequently. In Jadu Mallick's garden ouse the Master one day touched me and murmured omething to himself. I became unconscious. The effects of the touch lingered with me a month like an intoxication.

When he heard that a proposal had been made about my marriage, he wept, holding the feet of the image of Kali With tears in his eyes he prayed to the Divine Mother, "O Mother!, please upset the whole thing, don't let Narendra be drowned"

One day grandmother overheard my Master speaking in my room about the efficacy of a celibate life She told of this to my parents They became greatly concerned lest I should renounce the world, and were increasingly anxious that I should marry. My mother was especially fearful lest I should leave the family to take upon myself the vows of a monastic life She often spoke of the matter to me, but I would give a casual reply But all their plannings for my marriage were frustrated by the strong will of the Master On one occasion all negotiations of marriage were settled, when a petty difference of opinion arose and the engagement was broken

Then came a terrible time for me personally and for all the other boys who used to frequent Sri Ramakrishna as well. But to me came such misfortune! My father died at that time, and we were left poor.

After my father's death my mother and my brothers were starving When the master met Annada Guha one day, he said to him, "Narendra's father has died His family is in a state of privation. It would be good if his friends helped him now with money.

After Annada had left, I scolded him. I said, "Why did you say all these things to him"? Thus rebuked, he

wept and said, "Alas! for your sake I could beg fro door to door." He tamed us by his love.

Even before the period of mourning (after my father' death) was over I had to knock about in search of a jol Starving and barefooted I wandered from office to offic under the scorching noon-day sun with an application i my hand, one or two intimate friends, who sympathise with me in my misfortunes, accompanying me sometime. But everywhere the door was slammed in my face Th first contact with the reality of life convinced me tha unselfish sympathy was a rarity in the world There wa no place in it for the weak, the poor and the destitute. I noticed that those who only a few days ago would have been proud to help me in any way, now turned their face against me, though they had enough and to spare. Seeing all this, the world sometimes seemed to me to be the handiwork of the devil. One day, weary and footsore, I sat down in the shade of the Ochterlony monument in the Maidan. Some friends of mine happened to be there, one of whom sang a song about the overflowing grace of God, perhaps to comfort me. It was like a terrible blow on my head. I remembered the helpless condition of my mother and brothers, and exclaimed in bitter anguish and despondency, "Will you please stop that song? such fancies may be pleasing to those who are born with a silver spoon in their mouth and have no starving relatives at home. Yes, there was a time when I too thought like that. But today, before the hard facts of life, it sounds like grim mockery." My friend must have been wounded. How could he fathom the dire misery that had forced

these words out of my mouth? Some times when I foun that there were not enough provisions for the family an my purse was empty, I would pretend to my mother th I had an invitation to dine out and remain practical without food Out of self-respect I could not disclo the fact to others My rich friends sometimes request me to come to their homes and gardens to sing. I had comply when I could not avoid it. I did not feel inclin to express my woes before them nor did they try the selves to find out my difficulties. A few among th sometimes used to ask me, "Why do you look so pale and weak today?" Only one of them came to know about my poverty without my knowledge, and now and then sent anonymous help to my mother by which act of kindness he put me under a deep debt of gratitude

Some of my old friends who earned their livelihood by unfair means asked me to join them A few among them who had been compelled to follow this dubious way of life by sudden turns of fortune, as in my case, really felt sympathy for me There were other troubles also Various temptations came in my way A rich woman sent me an ugly proposal to end my days of penury which I sternly rejected with scorn Another woman also made similar overtures to me I said to her "You have wasted your life, seeking the pleasures of the flesh The dark shadows of death are before you Have you done anything to face that? Give up all these filthy desires and remember God"

In spite of all these troubles, however, I never lost faith in the existence of God nor in His Divine Mercy.

It was ever alien to my nature to dis[illegible]
On the contrary it was a habit with me from my bo
not to hide even my thoughts from others though
or anything else. So it was quite natural for me co
proceed to prove before the world that God was a
or that even if He existed, to call upon Him was fru
Soon the report gained currency that I was an atheist
did not scruple to drink or even frequent houses o
fame. This unmerited calumny hardened my heart
more. I openly declared that in this miserable w
there was nothing reprehensible in a man, who see
for a brief respite, would resort to anything. Not
that, but if I was once convinced of the efficacy of su
course I would not, through fear of anybody, shrink f
following it.

"I hate this world, this dream, this horrible nightmare, with its churches and chicaneries, its books and blackguardisms - its fair faces and false hearts - its howling righteousness on the surface and utter hollowness beneath and, above all, its sanctified shopkeeping "

March 2, 1884 : I am now studying the views of the atheists A garbled report of the matter soon reached the ears of the Master and his devotees in Calcutta Some of these came to me to have a first hand knowledge of the situation and hinted to me that they believed in some of the rumours at least A sense of wounded pride filled my heart on finding that they could think me so low. In an exasperated mood I gave them to understand plainly that it was cowardice to believe in God through fear of hell and argued with them as to His existence' or non-existence quoting several Western philosophers in support. The result was that they took leave of me with the conviction that I was hopelessly lost, and I was glad. I thought, Sri Ramakrishna perhaps also would believe that and this thought filled me with uncontrollable pique "Never mind", I said to myself, "if the good or bad opinion of a man rests upon such flimsy foundation, I don't care" But I was amazed to hear later that the Master had, at first, received the report coldly, without expressing an opinion one way or the other. And when one of his favourite disciples, Bhavanath, said to him with tears in his eyes, "Sir, I could not even dream that

[illegible] low." He was furious and said,
[illegible] has told me that it can never
[illegible] at you if you speak to

But notwithstanding these forced atheistic views, tl vivid memory of the Divine Visions I had experience since my boyhood, and especially after my contact wit Sri Ramakrishna, would lead me to think that God mu exist and there must be some way to realise Hir Otherwise life would be meaningless In the midst c all troubles and tribulations I must find that way Day passed, and the mind continued to waver between doub and certainty My pecuniary wants also remained ju the same

The summer was over, and the rains set in. Th search for a job still went on One evening, after a whol day's fast and exposure to rain I was returning home witl tired limbs and a jaded mind and overpowered witl exhaustion and unable to move a step forward, I sanl down on the outer plinth of a house on the roadside.

I can't say whether I was insensible for a time or not Various thoughts crowded in my mind and I was toc weak to drive them off and fix my attention on a particular thing. Suddenly I felt as if by some Divine Power the coverings of my soul were removed one after another. All my former doubts regarding the co-existence of Divine Justice and Mercy and the presence of misery in the creation of a Blissful Providence, were automatically solved. By a deep introspection I found the meaning of it all and was satisfied. As I proceeded homewards I found there was no trace of fatigue in the body and the mind was refreshed with wonderful strength and peace. The night was well-nigh over.

lik'

less to strive for sense pleasures I began secretly to prepare to renounce the world like my grandfather. I fixed a day for the purpose and was glad to hear that the Master was to come to Calcutta that very day. "It is lucky" I thought, "I shall leave the world with the blessings of my Guru" As soon as I met the Master he pressed me hard to spend that night with him at Dakshineshwar I made various excuses, but to no purpose I had to accompany him There was not much talk in the carriage Reaching Dakshineshwar I was seated for some time in his room along with others, when he went into a trance Presently he drew near me and touching me with great tenderness, began to sing a song, with tears in his eyes I had repressed my feelings so long but they now overflowed in tears. The meaning of the song was too apparent He knew of my intentions The audience marvelled at the exchange of feeling between us When the Master regained his normal mood, some of them asked the reason of it, and he replied with a smile, "Oh, it was something between him and me!" Then at night he dismissed the others and calling me to his side said, "I know you have come for the Mother's work and won't be able to remain in the world But for my sake, stay as long as I live." Saying this he burst into tears again The next day with his permission I returned home A thousand thoughts about the maintenance of the family assailed me. I began to look about again for a living

Now I was in want of food and had to work hard besides. Oh the tremendous labour!

By working in an attorney's office and tr
a few books, I got just enough means to live fro
to mouth, but it was not permanent and there
fixed income to maintain my mother and brother

One day the idea struck me that God listene
Ramakrishna's prayers So why should I not ask
pray for me for the removal of my pecuniary
favour the master would never deny me I h
Dakshineshwar and insisted on his making the a
behalf of my starving family. He said, "My boy
make such demands But why don't you go and
Mother yourself? All your sufferings are due
disregard of Her." I said, "I do not know the
you speak to Her on my behalf You must" He
tenderly, "My dear boy, I have done so again an
But you do not accept Her, so she does not g
prayer. All right, it is Tuesday-go to the Kal
to night, prostrate yourself before the mother
Her any boon you like It shall be granted. She i
ledge Absolute, the Inscrutable Power of Brahm
by Her mere will she has given birth to this world
thing is in Her power to give". I believed every w
eagerly waited for the night About 9 O' Clo
Master cammanded me to go to the temple. As I
was filled with a Divine intoxication. My feet w
steady. My heart was leaping in anticipation of
of beholding the living Goddess and hearing Her
I was full of the idea. Reaching the temple as I c
eyes upon the image, I actually found that the
was living and conscious, the Perennil Fou

Divine Love and Beauty I was caught in a surging wave of devotion and love In an ecstacy of joy I prostrated myself again and again before the Mother and prayed, "Mother, give me discrimination! Give me renunciation, give me knowledge and devotion, grant that I may have an uninterrupted vision of Thee!" A serene peace reigned in my soul The world was forgotten. Only the Divine Mother shone within my heart

As soon as I returned, Sri Ramakrishna asked me if I had prayed to the Mother for a removal of my worldly wants I was startled at this question and said, "No, Sir, I forgot all about it. But is there any remedy now?" "Go again," said he, "and tell Her about your wants" I again set out for the temple, but at the sight of the Mother again forgot my mission, bowed to Her repeatedly and prayed only for love and devotion The Master asked if I had done it the second time I told him what had happened He said, "How thoughtless! couldn't you restrain yourself enough to say those few words? Well try once more and make that prayer to Her. Quick!". I went for the third time, but on entering the temple a terrible shame overpowered me. I thought, "What a trifle have I come to pray to the Mother about! It is like asking a gracious king for a few vegetables! What a fool I am! In shame and remorse I bowed to Her respectfully and said, "Mother, I want nothing but knowledge and devotion". Coming out of the temple I understood that all this was due to Sri Ramakrishna's will. Otherwise how could I fail in my object no less than thrice? I came to him and said "Sir, it is you who have cast a charm

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to mouth, but it was not permanent and there wa
fixed income to maintain my mother and brothers

spiritual power which would in the fulness of time manifest itself Holding that bright picture before us, he would speak highly of us and encourage us Again, he would warn us lest we should frustrate this future consummation by becoming entangled in worldly desires, and further, he would keep us under control by carefully observing even the minute details of our life All this *was done silently and unobtrusively That was the great* secret of his training of the disciples and moulding of their lives Once I felt that I could not practise deeper concentration in meditation I told him of it and sought his advice and direction He told me his personal experiences in the matter and gave me instructions I remember that as I sat down to meditate during the early hours of the morning, my mind would be disturbed and diverted by the shrill note of the whistle of a neighbouring jute mill I told him about it and he advised me to concentrate my mind on the very sound of the whistle I followed his advice and derived from it much benefit On another occasion I felt great difficulty in totally forgetting my body during meditation and concentrating the mind wholly on the ideal I went to him for counsel and he gave me the very instruction which he himself had received from Tota Puri while practising Samadhi at the time of his Vedantic Sadhana.

He sharply pressed between my two *eyebrows* with his finger nail and said "Now concentrate your mind on this painful sensation!" As a result I found I could concentrate the mind easily on that sensation as long as I liked and during that period, I completely forgot the consciousness of other parts of my body, not to speak

over my mind and made me forgetful. Now please grant me the boon that my people at home may no longer suffer the pinch of poverty!" He said, "Such a prayer never comes from my lips I asked you to pray for yourself, but you couldn't do it It appears that you are not destined to enjoy worldly happiness Well, I can't help it." But I wouldn't let him go I insisted on his granting that prayer at last and said, "All right, your people at home will never be in want of plain food and clothing "

Sri Ramakrishna was the only person who ever since he had met me believed in me uniformly throughout. Even my Mother and brothers did not do so It was his unflinching trust and love for me that bound me to him for ever He alone knew how love another Worldly people only make a show of love for selfish ends.

It is possible to give others even an idea of the ineffable joy we derived from the presence of the Master. It is really beyond our understanding how he [illegible]

restraint with the beginner, now overpowering him in the struggle with great difficulty, as it were, again owning defeat at his hands to strengthen his spirit of self-reliance, in exactly the same manner did Sri Ramakrishna treat us Realising that in all exists the Atman which is the source of infinite strength, in every individual, pigmy though he might be, he was able to see the potential giant. He could clearly discern the latent

spiritual power which would in the fulness of time manifest itself. Holding that bright picture before us, he would speak highly of us and encourage us. Again, he would warn us lest we should frustrate this future consummation by becoming entangled in worldly desires, and further, he would keep us under control by carefully observing even the minute details of our life. All this was done silently and unobtrusively That was the great secret of his training of the disciples and moulding of their lives Once I felt that I could not practice deeper concentration in meditation I told him of it and sought his advice and direction He told me his personal experiences in the matter and gave me instructions. I remember that as I sat down to meditate during the early hours of the morning, my mind would be disturbed and diverted by the shrill note of the whistle of a neighbouring jute mill I told him about it and he advised me to concentrate my mind on the very sound of the whistle. I followed his advice and derived from it much benefit. On another occasion I felt great difficulty in totally forgetting my body during meditation and concentrating the mind wholly on the ideal I went to him for counsel and he gave me the very instruction which he himself had received from Tota Puri while practising Samadhi at the time of his Vedantic Sadhana

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of their causing any distraction in the way of my meditation. The solitude of the Panchavati, associated with the various spiritual realisations of the Master, was also the suitable place for our meditation Besides, meditation and spiritual exercises, we used to spend a good deal of time there in sheer fun and merry-making Sri Ramakrishna also joined with us and by taking a part enhanced our innocent pleasure We used to run and skip about, climb on the trees, swing from the creepers and at times hold merry picnics

On the first day of the picnic the Master noticed that I myself had cooked the food and he partook of it. I knew that he could not take food unless it was cooked by Brahmins, and, therefore, I had arranged for his meal at the Kali Temple But he said, "It won't be wrong for me to take food from such a pure soul like yourself!" Inspite of my repeated remonstrations, he enjoyed the food cooked by me that day.

He loved me so much! But whenever an impure idea crept into my mind, he at once knew it While going round with Annada, sometimes I found myself in the company of evil people On those occasions, the Master could not eat any food from my hands. He could raise his hand only a little but could not bring it to his mouth On one such occasion, while he was ill, he brought his hand very close to his mouth, but it did not go in. He said to me, "You are not yet ready".

How many times he prayed to the Divine Mother for my sake! After my father's death when I had no food

at home, and my mother and sisters and brothers wer starving too, the Master prayed to the Divine Mother t give me money. But I didn't get any money. Th Master told me what the Divine Mother had said t him. "He would get simple food and clothing."

How I used to hate Kali and all Her ways! Th was the ground of my six years' fight - that I could nc accept Her But I had to accept Her at last! Ram krishna Paramahamsa dedicated me to Her, and I no believe that She guides me in everything I do, and do with me what She will. - Yet I fought so long! I love him (the Master) you see, and that was what held me I saw his marvellous purity.. I felt his wonderful love. His greatness had not dawned on me then. All that came afterwards, when I had given in At that time I thought him a brain-sick baby, always seeing visions and the rest All that I hated. And then I too had to accept Her!

No, the thing that made me do it is a secret which will die with me I had great misfortunes at that time... It was an opportunity... She made a slave of me. Those were the very words - "a slave of you" And Ramakrishna Paramahamsa made me over to Her... Strange! He lived only two years after doing that, and most of the time he was suffering Not more than six months did he keep his own health and brightness

Indeed, I was, in a fix in trying to explain to the Master one day the meaning of 'blind faith'. I could find no meaning for the expression I gave up using that

phrase since then, as I was convinced of the truth of the Master's contention

March 1, 1885 I go to the house of Girish Ghose now and then He has given up his old associates. Nowadays Girish Ghosh thinks of nothing but spiritual things

Oct. 27, 1885 We think of him (Sri Ramakrishna) as a person who is like God Do you know what it is like? There is a point between the vegetable creation and the animal creation where it is very difficult to determine whether a particular thing is a vegetable or an animal Likewise, there is a stage between the man-world and the God-world where it is extremly hard to say whether a person is a man or a God. I do not say he is God What I am saying is that he is a God-like man We offer worship to him bordering on divine worship

JAN. 4 1886

~~*Dec. 21, 1885*~~: I have been thinking of going there (to Dakshineshwar) today I intend to light a fire under the bel-tree and meditate I shall feel greatly relieved if I find a medicine that will make me forget all I have studied

I was meditating here (Cossipore garden-house where the *Master was then staying for health reasons) last* Saturday when suddenly I felt a peculiar sensation in my heart

Probably, it was the awakening of the Kundalini. I clearly perceived the Ida and the Pingala nerves I asked Hazra to feel my chest. Yesterday I saw him (Sri Ramakrishna) upstairs and told him about it. I said to him, "All the others have had their realisation, please give me some. All have succeeded, shall I alone remain unsatisfied?" He said, "Why don't you settle your family affairs first and then come to me? You will get everything What do you want?" I replied, "It is my desire to remain absorbed in Samadhi continually for three or four days, only once in a while coming down to the sense plane to eat a little food" Thereupon he said to me, "You are a very small-minded person There is a state higher even than that (Samadhi). 'All that exists art Thou', it is you who sing that song! Settle your family affairs and then come to me You will attain a state higher than Samadhi" I went home My people scolded me saying, "Why do you wander about like a vagabond? Your law examination is near at hand, and you are not paying any attention to your studies You wander about aimlessly" My mother did not say anything. She was eager to feed me She gave me venison. I ate a little, though I didn't feel like eating meat

I went to my study at my grandmother's. As I tried to read I was seized with a great fear, as if studying were a terrible thing My heart struggled within me I burst into tears. I never wept so bitterly in my life I left my books and ran away I ran along the streets My shoes slipped from my feet - I didn't know where I ran past haystack and got hay all over me. I kept on running along the road to Cossipore.

Since reading the Vivekachudamani I have felt very much depressed In it Sankaracharya says that only through great *tapasya* and good fortune does one acquire these three things a human birth, the desire for liberation, and refuge with a great soul I said to myself: 'I have surely gained all these three As a result of great tapasya, I have been born a human being; through great tapasya, again, I have the desire for liberation, and through great tapasya, I have secured the companionship of such a great soul'

> ***January 5, 1886*** . A friend who came here (Cossipore) said he would lend me a hundred rupees. That will take care of the family for three months. I am going home to make that arrangement

Oh, very poor, almost starving all the time I was the only hope of the family, the only one who could do anything to help them. I had to stand between my two worlds On one hand, I would have to see my mother and brothers starve unto death, on the other, I believed that this man's (Sri Ramakrishna's) ideas were for the good of India, and the world, and had to be preached and worked out. And so, the fight went on in my mind for days and months. Sometimes, I would pray for five or six days and nights together, without stopping Oh, the angony of those days! I was living in hell! The natural affection of my boy's heart drawing me to my family - I could not bear to see those who were the nearest and dearest to me suffering. On the other hand ithise with me. Who would sympathise

with the imaginations of a boy? Imaginations that caused so much suffering to others! Who would sympathise with me? None.

Has anybody seen God as I see that tree? Sri Ramakrishna's experience may be his hallucination. I want truth The other day I had a great argument with Sri Ramakrishna himself. He said to me, "Some people call me God". I replied, "Let a thousand people call you God, but I shall certainly not call you God as long as I do not know it to be true" He said, "Whatever many people say is indeed truth, that is dharma." Thereupon, I replied, "Let others proclaim a thing as truth, but I shall certainly not listen to them unless I myself realize it as truth "

> ***April 23, 1886*** How amazing it is! One learns hardly anything, though one reads book for many years How can a man realise God by practising Sadhana for two or three days? Is it easy to realise God? I have no peace.

Staying in the Cossipore garden, Sri Ramakrishna said to us, "The Divine Mother showed me that all of these are not my inner devotees." Sri Ramakrishna said so, that day, with respect to both his men and women devotees.

Once I came to know about my true Self in Nirvikalpa Samadhi at the Cossipore garden-house. In that experience, I felt that I had no body. I could see only my face. The Master was in the upstairs room I had that experience downstairs. I was weeping. I said,

"What has happened to me?" The elder Gopal went to the Master's room and said. "Naren is crying" When I saw the Master he said to me, "Now you have known. But, I am going to keep the key with me" I said to him "What is it that happened to me?" Turning to the devotees, he said, "He will not keep his body if he knows who he is. But I have put a veil over his eyes"

One day, in Cossipore garden, I had expressed my prayer to Sri Ramakrishna with great earnestness. Then, in the evening, at the hour of meditation, I lost the consciousness of the body, and felt that it was absolutely non-existent. I felt that sun, moon, space, time, ether and all that melted far away into the unknown; the body consciousness had almost vanished, and I had nearly merged in the Supreme. But I had just a trace of the feeling of Ego, so I could again return to the world of relativity from the Samadhi In this state of Samadhi all the differences between 'I' and 'Brahman' go away; everything is reduced to unity, like the waters of the Infinite Ocean, – water everywhere, nothing else exists – language and thought, all fail there.

After that experience, even after trying repeatedly, I failed to bring back the state of Samadhi. On informing Sri Ramakrishna about it, he said, "If you remain day and night in that state, the work of the Divine Mother will not be accomplished, therefore, you won't be able to induce that state again, when your work is finished, it will come again!"

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that Avataras alone can descend to the ordinary plane from that state of

Samadhi, for the good of the world. Ordinary *jivas* d
not, immersed in that state, they remain alive for
period of 21 days, after that, their body drops like a ser
leaf from the tree of Samsara

All the philosophy and scriptures have come fro
the plane of relative knowledge of subject and objec
But, no thought or language of the human mind ca
fully express the Reality which lies beyond the plane c
relative knowledge! Science, Philosophy, etc are onl
partial truth, so, they can never be the adequate char
nels of expression for the transcendent reality Henc
viewed from the transcendent standpoint, everythir
appears to be unreal - religious creeds and works, I an
thou, and the universe - everything is unreal! The
only it is perceived that I am the only reality - 'I am the
all-pervading Atman and I am the proof of my own existence!
Where is the room for a separate proof to establish the reality of my existence? I am, as the scriptures
says, "नित्यसत्यम् प्रसिद्धम्" - always known to myself as the
eternal subject I have actually seen that state, realised it

It happened when I used to meditate before a lighted
fire under a tree at the Cossipore garden house One
day, while meditating, I asked Kali (later Abhedananda)
to hold my hand Kali said to me, "When I touched
your body, I felt someting like an electric shock coming
to my body."

Now all the ideas that I preach are only an attempt
to echo his (Sri Ramakrishna's) ideas Nothing is mine
originally Every word that I have ever uttered which is

true and good is simply an attempt to echo his voice. Read his life by Prof. Max Muller.

Well, there at his feet I conceived these ideas—there, with some other young men. I was just a boy. I went there (to Sri Ramakrishna) when I was about sixteen. Some of the other boys were still younger, some a little older—about a dozen or more. And together we concieved that this ideal had to be spread And not only spread, but made practical. That is to say, we must show the spirituality of the Hindus, the mercifulness of the Bud- [illegible] the brotherhood of [illegible] lives "We shall [illegible]" he said, "we will not wait"

Our teacher was an old man who could never touch a coin with his hands. He took just the little food offered, just so many yards of cotton cloth, no more. He could never be induced to take any other gift. With all these marvellous ideas, he was strict, because that made him free. The monk in India is the friend of the prince today, dines with him and tomorrow he is with the beggar, sleeps under a tree.

He (our teacher) used to call me Narayan and he loved me intensely, which made many quite jealous of me, He knew one's character by sight, and never changed his opinion He could perceive, as it were, supersensual things, while we try to know one's character by reason, with the result that our judgements are often fallacious. He called some persons his *Antarangas* or belonging to

the 'inner circle' and he used to teach them the secrets of his own nature and those of yoga To the outsiders or *Bahirangas*, he taught those parables now known as 'Sayings' He used to prepare those youngmen (the former class) for his work, and though many complained to him about them, he paid no heed I may have perhaps a better opinion of a *Bahiranga* than an *Antaranga* through his actions, but I have a superstitious regard for the latter "Love me, love my dog," as they say I love that Brahmin priest (our teacher) intensely, and, therefore, love whatever he used to love, whatever he used to regard! He was afraid about me that I might create a sect, if left to myself

He used to say to some, "You will not attain spirituality in this life He sensed everything, and this will explain his apparent partiality to some He, as a scientist, used to see that different treatment None except the "inner circle" were allowed to sleep in his room It is not true that those who have not seen him will not attain salvation, neither is it true that a man who has seen him thrice will attain Mukti

It has become a trite saying that idolatry is wrong, and every man swallows it at the present time without questioning I once thought so, and to pay the penalty of that, I had to learn my lesson sitting at the feet of a man who realized everything through idols, I allude to Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, my teacher, my master, my hero, my ideal, my God in life.

Despite the many iniquities that have found entrance into the practices of image-worship as it is in vogue now,

true and good is simply an attempt to echo his voice. Read his life by Prof. Max Muller

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have become a beggar. With this power, you are to do many works for the world s good before you return.'

Yes, Sri Ramakrishna did say out of his own lips that he was God, the all-perfect Brahman, so many times. And he said this to all of us One day while he was staying at the Cossipore garden, his body in imminent danger of falling off for ever, by the side of his bed I was saying in my mind, "Well, now if you can declare that you are God, then only will I belive you are really God Himself"

It was only two days before he passed away Immediately he looked upwards, all on a sudden and said, "He who was Rama, He who was Krishna, verily is He now Ramakrishna in this body And that not from the standpoint of your Vedanta!" At this, I was struck dumb Even we haven't had yet the perfect faith, after hearing it again and again from the holy lips of our Lord himself—our minds still get disturbed now and then with doubt and despair—and so, what shall we speak of others being slow to believe? It is indeed a very difficult matter to be able to declare and belive a man with a body like ours to be a God Himself. We may just go the length of declaring him to be "a perfected one", or "a knower of Brahman" Well, it matters nothing, whatever you may call him and think of him, a Saint or a Knower of Brahman. Never did come to this earth such an all-perfect man as Sri Ramakrishna! In the utter darkness of the world, this great man is like the shining pillar of illumination in this age! And by his light alone will man now cross the ocean of Samsara!

In Girish Chandra Ghosh alone I have seen that true resignation—that true spirit of a servant of the Lord,

I do not condemn it. Aye, where would I have been if I had not been blessed with the dust of the holy feet of that orthodox, image-worshipping Brahmin!

When my Master, Sri Ramakrishna, fell ill, a Brahmin suggested to him that he apply his tremendous mental power to cure himself. He said that if my Master would only concentrate his mind on the diseased part of the body it would heal. Sri Ramakrishna answered, "What! bring down the mind that I have given to God, to this little body?" He refused to think of body and illness. His mind was continually conscious of God; it was dedicated to him utterly. He would not use it for any other purpose.

Am I able to sit quiet? Two or three days before Sri Ramakrishna's passing away, She whom he used to call 'Kali' entered this body (of mine). It is She who takes me here and there and makes me work, without letting me remain quiet, or allowing me to look to my personal comforts.

No, I am not speaking metaphorically. Two or three days before his leaving the body, he called me to his side one day, and asking me to sit before him, looked steadfastly at me and fell into Samadhi. Then I really felt that a subtle force like an electric shock was entering my body! In a little while, I also lost outward consciousness and sat motionless. How long I stayed in that condition I do not remember; when consciousness returned I found Sri Ramakrishna shedding tears. On questioning him, he answered me affectionately, "Today, giving you my all, I

off – in spite of my desire to the contrary – after getting me brought to his presence ... Him alone I have found in this world to be like an ocean of unconditioned mercy.

Time and again, have I received in this life the marks of his grace. He stands behind and gets all the work done by me When lying helpless under a tree in an agony of hunger, when I had not even a scrap of cloth for *kaupin*, when I was resolved on travelling penniless round the world, even then help came in, always by the grace of Sri Ramakrishna And again when crowds jostled with one another in the streets of Chicago to have sight of this Vivekananda, then also I could digest without difficulty all the honours - a hundredth part of which would have been enough to turn mad any ordinary man - because I had his grace, and by his will, victory followed everywhere.

He (Sri Ramakrishna) was all Bhakti without, but within he was all Jnana, I am all Jnana without, but within my heart, it is all Bhakti All that has been weak has been mine All that has been life-giving, strengthening pure and bold, has been his inspiration, his words and he himself.

If there has been anything achieved by me, by thoughts, or words, or deeds, if from my lips has ever fallen one word that has helped anyone in the world, I lay no claim to it, it was his But if there have been curses falling from my lips, if there has been hatred coming out of me, it is all mine and not his.

And was it not because he was ever ready to sacrifice *himself* that Sri Ramakrishna took upon himself all his responsibility? What a unique spirit of resignation to the Lord? I have not met his parallel. From him have I learnt the lesson of self-surrender

I am a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, a perfect Sannyasin, under whose influence and ideas I fell. This great Sannyasin never assumed the negative or critical attitude towards other religions, but showed their positive side – how they could be carried into life and practised

It was given to me to live with a man who was as ardent a Dualist, as ardent an Advaitist, as ardent a Bhakta and a Jnani And living with this man first put into my head to understand the Upanishads and the text of the scriptures from an independent and better basis than by blindly following the commentators, and in my researches, I came to the conclusion that these texts are not all contradictory.

Never during his life did he (Sri Ramakrishna) refuse a single prayer of mine; millions of offences has he forgiven me, such great love even my parents never *had for me. There is no poetry, no exaggeration* in all this It is the bare truth and every disciple of his knows it. In times of great danger, great temptation, I have wept in extreme agony with the prayer, "O God, do save me.", and no response has come from anybody; but this wonderful saint, or *Avatara* or anything that he may be, has come to know of all my affliction through his powers of insight into human hearts and has lifted it

CHAPTER III

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, MY MASTER.

When by the process of time, fallen from the true ideals and rules of conduct and devoid of the spirit of renunciation, addicted only to blind usages and degraded in intellect, the descendants of the Aryans failed to appreciate even the spirit of the Puranas etc., which taught men of ordinary intelligence the abstruse truths of the Vedanta in concrete form and diffuse language, and appeared antagonistic to one another on the surface, because of each inculcating with special emphasis only particular aspects of the spiritual ideal, - and when, as a consequence, they reduced India, the fair land of religion, to a scene of almost infernal confusion by breaking up piecemeal the one Eternal Religion of the Vedas (Sanatana Dharma), the grand synthesis of all the aspects of the spiritual ideals, into conflicting sects and by seeking to sacrifice one another in the flames of sectarian hatred and intolerence, - then, it was that Sri Bhagavan Ramakrishna incarnated himself in India to demonstrate what the true religion of the Aryan race is, to show where amidst all its many division and offshoots scattered over the land in the course of its immemorial history, lies the true unity of the Hindu religion, which, by its overwhelming number of sects discordant to superficial view, quarreling constantly with each other and abounding in customs divergent in every way, has constituted itself into a misleading enigma for our countrymen and the butt of contempt for foreigners and above all, to hold up before men, for their lasting welfare, as a living

Sri Ramakrishna himself is his own parallel. Has h
any exemplar? Truly, I tell you, I have understood h
(Sri Ramakrishna) very little. He appears to me
have been so great that whenever I have to speak a
thing about him, I am afraid lest I should ignore or exp
away the truth lest my little power should not suffic
lest in trying to extol him I should present his pictu
by painting him according to my lights and be little h
thereby!

Sri Ramakrishna's was a different case. What com
parison can there be between him and ordinary men
He practised in his life all the different ideals of relig
to show that each of them leads but to the One Trut
Shall you or I ever be able to do all that he has done
None of us have understood him fully. So I do no
venture to speak about him anywhere and everywhere
He only knows what he really was, his frame was
human one only, but everything else about him wa
entirely different from others.

The fact is that Sri Ramakrishna is not exactly wha
the ordinary followers have comprehended him to be
He had infinite moods and phases. Thousands of Vive
kanandas may spring forth through one gracious glance
of his eyes! But instead of doing that he has chosen to
get things done this time through me as his single instru-
ment, and what can I do in this matter?

Verily, verily, I say unto you he who wants Him finds Him
Go and verify it in your life. Try for three days, try with
genuine earnestness and you are sure to succeed

— SRI RAMAKRISHNA

To be good and to do good – that is the whole of religion.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Sankara had a great head, Ramanuja had large heart; and the time was ripe for one to be born, the embodiment of both this head and heart; the time was ripe for one to be born who in one body would have the brilliant intellect of Sankara and the wonderfully expansive infinite heart of Chaitanya, one who would see in every sect the same spirit working, the same God, one who would see God in every being; one whose heart would weep for the poor, for the weak, for the outcast, for the downtrodden, for everyone in this world, inside India or outside India, and bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion of head and heart into existence, such a man was born, and I had the good fortune to sit at his feet for years

It was while reforms of various kinds were being inaugurated in India, that a child was born of poor Brahmin parents on the 18th of February 1836, in one of the remote villages of Bengal The father and mother were very orthodox people Very poor they were, and yet many a time the mother would starve herself a whole day to help a poor man Of them, this child was born, and he was a peculiar child from very boyhood He remembered his past from his birth, and was conscious for what purpose he came into the world, and every power was devoted to the fulfilment of that purpose.

While he was quite young, his father died. The boy was sent to school He was peculiar, for after a few days he said, "I will not go to school any more." And he did not; that was the end of his going to school. But this boy had an elder brother, a learned professor, who took him to Calcutta, to study with him. After a short time,

every day, until he could think of nothing else. He could no more conduct the worship properly, could no more attend to the various details in all their minuteness. Often he would forget to place the food-offering before the image, sometimes he would forget to wave the light, at other times, he would wave it for hours, and forget everything else.

And that one idea was in his mind every day - "Is it true that Thou existest, O Mother? Why dost Thou not speak? Art Thou dead?" At last, it became impossible for him to serve in the temple. He left it and entered into a little wood that was near and lived there About this part of his life, he told me many times, he could not tell when the sun rose or set, or how he lived He lost all thought of himself and forgot to eat During this period, he was lovingly watched by a relative who put into his mouth food which he mechanically swallowed

the boy became fully convinced that the aim of all secular learning was mere material advancement and nothing more, and he resolved to give up study and devote himself solely to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge. The father being dead, the family was very poor, and this boy had to make his own living. He went to a place near Calcutta and became a temple priest.

In the temple was an image of the "Blissfull Mother." This boy had to conduct the worship morning and evening and by degrees, this one idea filled his mind: "Is there anything behind this image? Is it true that there is a Mother of Bliss in the universe? Is it true that She lives and guides this universe, or is it all a dream? Is there any reality in religion?"

This idea took possession of the boy and his whole life became concentrated upon that. Day after day, he would weep and say "Mother, is it true that Thou existest, or is it all poetry? Is the Blissful Mother an imagination of poets and misguided people, or is there such a Reality?" We have seen that of books, of education in our sense of the word, he had none; and so much the more natural, so much the more healthy was his mind, so much purer his thoughts, undiluted by drinking in the thoughts

clean, original man, a
that he was not broug
versity. However, t
seen—which was

heard and asked, "Does a wife forsake her husband in case he becomes lame?" What followed? The Pandits were struck dumb, all their Sastric commentaries and learned comments could not withstand the force of this simple statement. That is why Sri Ramakrishna came down to this earth, and discouraged mere book-learning so much That new life-force which he brought with him has to be instilled into learning and education

We have seen in Sri Ramakrishna how he had ther idea of divine motherhood in every woman, of whatever caste she might be, or whatever might be her worth

This whole universe is the manifestation of the Mother, and She was in every woman's body "Every woman represents the Mother, how can I think of woman in mere sex relation?" That was the idea Every woman was his Mother, he must bring himself to the state when he would see nothing but Mother in every woman, and he carried it out in his life.

Later on, this very man said to me, "My child, suppose there is a bag of gold in one room, and a robber in the next room, do you think that robber can sleep? He cannot His mind will be always thinking how to get into that room and obtain possession of that gold Do you think then that a man firmly persuaded that there is a Reality behind all these appearances, that there is a God, that there is One who never dies, One who is infinite bliss, compared with which these pleasures of the senses are simply playthings, can rest contended without struggling to attain it? Can he cease

never came until everything had been given up for He He had heard that the mother wanted to come to every one, but they would not have Her: that people wanted all sorts of foolish little *idols* to pray to, that they wanted their own enjoyments, and not the Mother, and that the moment they really wanted Her with their whole soul and nothing else, that moment She would come So, he *began to enter into that idea, he wanted to be exact* even on the plane of matter So, he threw away all the little property he had, and took a vow that he would never touch money and this one idea 'I will not touch money' became a part of him It may appear to be something occult, but even in after-life, when he was sleeping, if I touched him with a piece of money, his hand would *become bent, and his whole body would become,* as it were, paralysed The other idea that came into his mind was — lust was the other enemy Man is a soul and soul is sexless, neither man nor woman The idea of sex and the idea of money were the two things, he thought, that prevented him from seeing the Mother

This illiterate boy, possessed of renunciation, turned the heads of your great old Pundits. Once at the Dakshineshwar Temple, the *Brahmana* who was in charge of the worship of Vishnu broke a leg of the image. Pundits *were brought together at a meeting to give their opinions,* and they, after consulting old books and manuscripts, *declared that the worship of this broken image could not* be sanctioned according to the Sastras, and a new image would have to be consecrated There was consequently a great stir. Sri Ramakrishna was called at last. He

Later there came to the same grove a Sannyasin, of the begging friars of India, a learned man, a philosopher. He was a peculiar man; he was an idealist. This man began to teach the boy the philosophy of the Vedas, and he found very soon, to his astonishment, that the pupil was in some respects wiser than the master. He spent several months with the boy, after which he initiated him into the Order of Sannyasins, and took his departure.

When as a temple-priest his extra-ordinary worship made people think him deranged in his head, his relatives *took him home and married him to a little girl, thinking* that would turn his thoughts and restore the balance of his mind

But, he came back, and merged deeper in his madness The husband had entirely forgotten that he had a wife. In her far off home, the girl heard that her husband had become a religious enthusiast, and that he was even considered insane by many.

She resolved to learn the truth for herself, so she set out and walked to the place where her husband was. When at last she stood in her husband's presence, he at once admitted her right to be his life-partner The young man fell at the feet of his wife and said, "As for me, the Mother has shown me that She resides in every woman, and so, I have learned to look upon every woman as Mother That is the one idea I can have about you, but if you wish to draw me into the world, as I have been *married* to you, I am at *your service*."

The maiden was a pure and noble soul, and was able to understand her husband's aspirations and sympathise

He went to all the sects he could find, and whatever he took up, he went into it with his whole heart He did exactly as he was told, and in every instance, he arrived at the same result Thus, from actual experience he came to know that the goal of every religion is the same, that each is trying to teach the same thing, the difference being largely in method, and still more in language

That is what my Master found and he then set about to learn humility, because he had found that the one idea in all religions is "not me, but Thou," and he who says "not me", the Lord fills his heart He now set himself to accomplish this As I have told you, whenever he wanted to do anything, he never confined himself to fine theories, but would enter into the practice immediately We see many persons talking the most wonderfully fine things about charity and about equality and the rights of other people and all that, but only in theory. I was so fortunate as to find one who was able to carry theory into practice. He had the most wonderful faculty of carrying everything into practice which he thought was right

Now, there was a family of Pariahs living near the the place My Master would go to a Pariah and asked to be allowed to clean his house The business of the Pariah is to clean the streets of the cities, and to keep houses clean. By birth the Brahmin stands for holiness, and the pariah for the very reverse. And this Brahmin asked to be allowed to do the menial services in the house of the pariah! The pariah, of course, could not

with them. She quickly told him that she had no wi to drag him down to a life of worldliness; but that she desired was to remain near him, to serve him and learn from him. *She became one of his most devote* disciples, always revering him as a divine being Thu through his wife's consent, the last barrier was remove and he was free to lead the life he had chosen

That was the woman The husband went on an became a monk, in his own way, and from a distanc the wife went on helping as much as she could An later, when the *man had become a great spiritual giant* she came – really, she was the first disciple and she spen the rest of her life taking care of the body of this man He never knew whether he was living or dying Some*times when talking, he would get so absorbed that if he* sat on live charcoals, he would not know it! Live char*coals forgetting all about his body at the time*

The next desire that seized upon the soul of this man was to know the truth about the various religions. Up to that time, he had not known any religion but his *own. He wanted to understand what other religions* were like. So he sought teachers of other religions. He found a Mahommedan Saint and went to live with him; he *underwent the disciplines* prescribed by him, and to his astonishment found that when faithfully carried out, these devotional methods led him to the same goal he had already attained He gathered similar *experience* from following the true religion of Jesus the Christ.

Think of the blessedness of that life from which all carnality has vanished, which can look upon every woman with that love and reverence, when every woman's face becomes transfigured, and only the face of the Divine Mother, the Blissful One, the Protectress of the human race, shines upon it! Such purity is absolutely necessary if real spirituality is to be attained

This rigorous, unsullied purity came into the life of that man, all the struggles which we have in our lives were past for him His hard-earned jewels of spirituality, for which he had given three-quarters of his life, were now ready to be given to humanity, and then began his mission His teaching and preaching were peculiar This teacher had no thought whether he was to be respected or not, he had not the least idea that he was a great teacher and thought that it was the Mother who was doing everything and not he He always said, "If any good comes from my lips it is the Mother who speaks, what have I to do with it?" That was the one idea about his work, and to the day of his death, he never gave it up This man sought no one, his principle was first form character, first earn spirituality, and results will come of themselves His favourite illustration was "When the lotus opens, the bees come of their own accord to seek the honey so let the lotus of your character be full-blown and the results will follow" This is a great lesson to learn. My Master taught me this lesson hundreds of times, yet, I often forget it

Sri Ramakrishna, too, practised the Tantra, but not in the old way. Where there is the injunction of drinking

allow that, for they all think that if they allow a Brahmin to do such menial work, it will be an awful sin, and they will become extinct. The pariah would not permit it; so in the dead of night, when all were sleeping, Ramakrishna would enter the house. He had long hair, and with his hair, he would wipe the place saying, "Oh my Mother, make me the servant of the pariah, make me feel *that I am even lower than the pariah."*

There were various other preparations, which would take a long time to relate, and I want to give you just a sketch of his life. For years, he thus educated himself. One of the *sadhanas* was to root out the *sex* idea. Having been born in a masculine body, this man wanted to bring the feminine idea into everything. He began to think that he was a woman, he dressed like a woman, spoke like a woman, gave up the occupation of men, and *lived in the household among the women of a good* family, until after years of this discipline, his mind became changed, and he entirely forgot the idea of sex; thus, the whole view of life became changed to him.

We hear in the West about worshipping woman, but this is usually for her youth and beauty. This man meant by worshipping woman, that to him every woman's face was that of the *Blissfull Mother*, and nothing but that. I myself have seen this man standing before those women whom society would not touch, and falling at their feet bathed in tears saying, "Mother, in one form Thou art in the street, and in another form Thou art the *universe. I salute Thee, Mother, I salute* Thee."

some are mad after worldly love, some after Name, some after salvation and going to heaven In this big lunatic asylum, I am also mad, I am mad after God. You are mad, so am I; I think my madness is after all the best "

Ramakrishna was born in the Hooghly district in 1836 and died in 1886. He produced a deep effect on the life of Keshub Chandra Sen and others. By discipline of the body and subduing of the mind, he obtained a wonderful insight into the spiritual world. His face was distinguished by childlike tenderness, profound humility, and remarkable sweetness of expression No one could look upon it unmoved

it melts in the inner Self, which is the essence of infinite knowledge, One, and Itself Its own support. This is what is called *Nirvikalpa* Samadhi, free from all activities. In Sri Ramakrishna, we have again and again noticed both these forms of Samadhi He had not to struggle to get these states. It was a wonderful phenomenon! It was by seeing him that we could rightly understand these things.

It is not very difficult to bring under control the material powers and flaunt a miracle; but I do not find a more marvellous miracle than the manner in which this mad Brahmana (Sri Ramakrishna) used to handle human minds, like lumps of clay, breaking, moulding and remoulding them at ease and filling them with new ideas by mere touch.

wine, he would simply touch his forehead with a drop of it. The Tantrika form of worship is a very slippery ground.

The Puris seem to have a peculiar mission in rousing *the spirituality of Bengal. Sri Chaitanya Deva was initiated* into Sannyasa by Ishwar Puri, at Gaya. Bhagwan *Sri Ramakrishna got his Sannyasasrama from Tota Puri.*

Sri Ramakrishna wept and prayed to the Divine Mother to send him such a one to talk with as would have in him not the slightest tinge of *Kamakanchana*, for he would say, "My lips burn when I talk with the worldly-minded" He also used to say that he could not even bear the touch of the worldly-minded and the impure

This habit (in me) of seeing every person from his *strongest aspect must have been the training* under Ramakrishna Paramahamsa We all went by his path to *some extent.* Of course, *it was not so difficult for* us as he made it for himself He would eat and dress like the people he wanted to understand, take their initiation, and use their language. 'One must learn," he said, "to put *oneself* into another man's very soul!" And this method was his own! No one ever before in India became Christian and Mohammedan and Vaishnava by turns!

Take a thousand idols more if you can produce Ramakrishna Paramahamsa *through idol-worship*, and may God speed you!

The world used to call him mad, and this was his answer: "My friends, the whole world is a lunatic asylum;

yet he could not be persuaded to refrain from these exertions As soon as he heard that people were asking to see him, he would insist upon having them admitted, and would answer all their questions When expostulated with, he replied, "I do not care. I will give up twenty-thousand such bodies to help one man It is glorious to help even one man" There was no rest for him Once a man asked him, "Sir, you are a great Yogi; why do you not put your mind a little on your body and cure your disease?" At first he did not answer, but when the question was repeated, he gently said, "My friend, I thought you were a sage, but you talk like other men of the world This mind has been given to the Lord; do you mean to say that I should take it back and put it upon the body, which is but a mere cage of the soul?"

So, he went on preaching to the people, and the news spread that his body was about to pass away, and the people began to flock to him in greater crowds than ever When the people heard that this holy man was likely to go from them soon, they began to come round him more than ever and my Master went on teaching them without the least regard for his health We could not prevent this Many of the people came from long distances, and he would not rest until he had answered their questions. "While I can speak I must teach them", he would say and he was as good as his word One day, he told us that he would lay down the body and that day, on repeating the most sacred word of the Vedas, he entered into Samadhi and passed away.

I could not believe my own ears when I heard western people talking so much of consciousness! Conscious-

He began to preach when he was about forty; bu never went out to do it. He waited for those w wanted his teachings to come to him

He is worshipped in India as one of the great inc nations, and his birthday is celebrated there as a religio festival

He never spoke a harsh word about anyone. beautifully tolerant was he that every sect thought th he belonged to them. He found a place for each one H was free, but free in love, not in "thunder " The m type creates, the thundering type spreads.

Ramkrishna came to teach the religion of toda constructive and not destructive, he had to go afresh t nature to ask for facts and he got scientific religio which never says "believe" but "see" "I see, and you to can see." Sri Ramakrishna's teachings are "the gist o Hinduism," they were not peculiar to him Nor did h claim that they were, he cared naught for name an fame.

The other idea of his life was intense love fo others The first part of my Master's life was spent i acquiring spirituality, and the remaining years in distribu- ting it. Men came in crowds to hear him and he would

. . . . .

Gradually, there developed a vital throat disorder, and

The artistic faculty was highly developed in our Lord, Sri Ramakrishna, and he used to say that without this faculty none can be truly spiritual.

He used to say, "As long as I live, so long do I learn "

A certain young man of little understanding used always to blame Hindu Shastras before Sri Ramakrishna. One day, he praised the Bhagavad-Gita, on which Sri Ramakrishna said, "Methinks some European Pandit has praised the Gita, and so he has followed suit!"

It was no new truth that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa came to preach, though the advent brought the old truths to light In other words, he was the embodiment of all the past religious thoughts of India. His life alone made me understand what the Shastras really meant, and the whole plan and scope of the old Shastras

He was the Saviour of women, Saviour of the masses, Saviour of all, high and low

And the most wonderful part of it was that his life's work was just near a city which was full of Western thought, a city which had run mad after these Occidental ideas, a city which had become more Europeanised than any other city of India There he lived, without any book-learning whatsoever, this great intellect never learnt even to write his own name, but the most brilliant graduates of our university found in him an intellectual giant. He was a strange man, this Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the fulfilment of the Indian sages the sage for the time, one whose teaching is just now, in the present time, most beneficial. And mark the Divine Power working behind

ness? What does consciousness matter! Why, it nothing as compared with the unfathomable depths of t subconscious, and the heights of the superconscious. this, I could never be misled, for had I not seen Ram krishna Paramahamsa gather in ten minutes from a man subconscious mind, the whole of his past, and determ from that his future and his talent and powers?

Sri Ramakrishna was quite unable to take food in a indiscriminate way from the hands of any and all. happened many a time that he would not accept foo touched by a certain person or persons, and on rigorou investigation, it would turn out that these had som particular stain to hide

He used to deprecate lukewarmness in spiritua attainments, as, for instance, saying that religion would come gradually, and that there was no hurry for it

He used to disparage the longing for supernatural powers; his teaching was that one cannot attain to the Supreme Truth if one's mind is diverted to the manife station of the powers.

We have seen how Sri Ramakrishna would encourage *even those* whom we considered as worthless, and change the very course of their lives thereby! His very method of teaching was a unique phenomenon.

He never destroyed a single man's special inclinations. He gave words of hope and encouragement even to the most degraded of persons and lifted them up

Ramakrishna *Paramahamsa was* alive to the depths of his being, yet on the outer plane, who was more

In the Ramakrishna Incarnation, there is Knowledge, Devotion and Love, infinite knowledge, infinite love, infinite work, infinite compassion for all beings. What the whole Hindu race has thought for ages, he *lived* in one life. His life is the living commentary on the *Vedas* of all nations People will come to know him by degrees

The future, you say, will call Ramakrishna Paramahamsa an Incarnation of *Kali* Yes, I think there is no doubt that She worked up the body of Ramakrishna for Her own ends

He was contented simply to live that great life, and to leave it to others, to find the explanation!

One drop from the full ocean of his spirituality, if realised, will make gods of men Such a synthesis of universal ideas you will not find in the history of the world again Understand from this who was born in the person of Sri Ramakrishna When he used to instruct his Sannyasi disciples, he would rise from his seat and look about to see if any householder was coming that way or not If he found none, then in glowing words he would depict the glory of renunciation and *tapasya*. As a result of the rousing power of that fiery dispassion, we have renounced the world and become averse to worldliness

Of course, everybody who has come to Sri Ramakrishna has advanced in spirituality, is advancing and will advance; Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the perfected Rishis of a previous Kalpa (cycle) take human bodies and

the man. The son of a poor priest, born in an out-of-the-way village, unknown and unthought of, today is worshipped literally by thousands in Europe and America, and tomorrow will be worshipped by thousands more. Who knows the plans of the Lord? Let me say that if I have told one word of truth, it was his and his alone and if I have told many things, which were not true, which were not correct, which were not beneficial to the human race, they were all mine, and on me rests the responsibility.

It requires striving through many births to reach perfection or the ultimate stage with regard to a single one of the many devotional attitudes. But, Sri Ramakrishna, the king of the realm of spiritual sentiments, perfected himself in no less than eighteen different forms of devotion! He also used to say that his body would not have endured had he not held himself on to this play of spiritual sentiments.

To remove all the corruption in (present-day) religion, the Lord has incarnated Himself on earth in the present age in the person of Sri Ramakrishna. The universal teachings that he offered, if spread all over the world, will do good to humanity and the world. not for many a century past has India produced so great, so wonderful a teacher of religious synthesis.

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa came for the good of the world, call Him a man, or God, or an Incarnation, just as you please.

From the day Sri Ramakrishna was born, dates the growth of modern India and of the Golden Age.

In the highest truth of the *Parabrahman*, there is no distinction of sex. We only notice this on the relative plane. And the more the mind becomes introspective, the more that idea of difference vanishes. When the mind is wholly merged in the homogeneous and undifferentiated Brahman, then, such ideas as this is a man or that a woman, do not remain at all. We have actually seen this in the life of Sri Ramakrishna.

You study all the great teachers the world has produced, and you will see that not one of them went into the various explanations of texts, on their part, there is no attempt at "text-torturing," no saying – "this word means this, and this is the philological connection between this and that word." *Yet, they taught.*

The Master used to say that the sapling must be hedged round.

come on earth with the Avataras. They are the associates of the Lord. God works through them and propagates His religion. Know this for truth that they alone are the associates of the Avatara who have renounced all self for the sake of others, who giving up all sense enjoyments with repugnance, spend their lives for the good of the world, for the welfare of the *Jivas*.

Shri Ramakrishna was a wonderful gardener. Therefore, he has made a bouquet of different flowers (men of different types) and formed his Order All different types and ideas have come into it and many more will come.

All devotees (of Sri Ramakrishna) do not belong to the group of his most intimate and nearest disciples.

When an Avatara comes, then with him are born liberated persons as helpers in his world-play Only Avataras have the power to dispel the darkness of a million souls and give them salvation in one life. This is known as grace.

The way is to call on him (Sri Ramakrishna). Calling on him, many are blessed with his vision, can see him in a human form just like ours and obtain his grace.

Those who have seen Sri Ramakrishna are really blessed. Their family and birth have become purified by it.

Nobody has been able to understand who came on earth as Sri Ramakrishna. Even his own nearest devotees have got no real clue to it. Only some have got a little inkling of it. All will understand it afterwards.

ledge, Love and renunciation, catholicity and the desir to serve mankind. So, where is anyone else to compar with him? He is born in vain who cannot appreciat him! My supreme good fortune is that I am h servant through life after life A single word of his to me far weightier than the Vedas and the Vedanta Oh, I am the servant of the servants of his servants .. Certain fishermen and illiterate people called Jesus Christ a God, but, the literate people killed him. Buddha was honoured in his life time by a number of merchants and cowherds. But Ramakrishna has been worshipped in his life time – towards the end of the nineteenth century – by the demons and giants of the university as God incarnate Here is a man in whose company we have been day and night, and yet consider him to be a far greater personality than any of the earlier Avataras.

Our ideal is, of course, the abstract Brahman. But as all cannot be inspired by an abstract ideal, we must have a personal ideal We have got that in the person of Sri Ramakrishna In order that Vedanta may be realised by everyone, there must be a person who is in sympathy with the present generation This is fulfilled in Sri Ramakrishna. So now, we should place him before everyone Whether one accepts him as a Sadhu or an Avatara, does not matter

He said he would come once again with us. Then, I think he will embrace *Videha-Mukti* (Absolute Emancipation).

The mind of those who have truly received Sri Ramakrishna's grace cannot be attached to worldliness.

If anyone accepts Paramahamsa Deva as an Avatara, it is all right; if he doesn't do so, it is just the same. The truth about it is that in point of character, Paramahamsa Deva beats all previous record, and as regards teaching, he was more liberal, *more original and more progressive* than all his predecessors. In other words, the older Teachers were rather one-sided, while the teaching of this new Incarnation or Teacher is that the best point of *Yoga, Devotion, Knowledge and Work must be combined* now so as to form a new Society. The older ones were no doubt good, but this is the new religion of the age — the synthesis of yoga, knowledge, devotion and work — *the propagation of knowledge and devotion to all, down* to the very lowest, without distinction of age or sex. The previous Incarnations were all right but they have been synthesised in the person of Ramakrishna

That Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was God incarnate I have not the least doubt. ·but, let people find out for *themselves what he used to teach*

Without studying Ramakrishna Paramahamsa first, *one can never understand the real import* of the Vedas, the Vedanta, of the Bhagavata and the other Puranas. His life is a searchlight of infinite power thrown upon the whole mass of Indian religious thought. He was the *living commentary* on the Vedas and their aim He had lived in one life the whole cycle of the national religious life of India.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna was an extraordinary searchlight under whose illumination one is able to really understand the whole scope of Hindu religion. He was the object-lesson of all the theoretical knowledge given in the Shastras. He showed by his life what the Rishis and Avataras really wanted to teach. The books were theories, he was the realisation. This man had in fifty-one years lived the five thousand years of national spiritual life and so raised himself to be an object-lesson for future generations. The Vedas can only be explained and the Shastras reconciled by his theory of *Avastha* or "conditioned" stages – that we must not only tolerate others, but positively embrace them, and that truth is the basis of all religions.

He had a whole world of knowledge to teach.

He did not found a sect. No, His whole life was spent in breaking down the barriers of sectarianism and dogma. He formed no sect. Quite the reverse. He advocated and strove to establish absolute freedom of thought. He was a great Yogi.

While others, who have nothing to teach, will take up a word and write a three-volume book on its origin and use, my Master used to say: "Think of the men who went into a mango orchard and busied themselves in counting the leaves, and examining the colour of the leaves, the size of the twigs, the number of branches, and so forth, while only one of them had the sense to begin to eat the mangoes!"

These Teachers of all teachers, the Christs of the world, represent God Himself in the form of man. They can

Sri Ramakrishna

In company of such Avataras and by their grace, the darkness of the mind disappears in a trice, and realisation flashes immediately in the heart. Why or by what process it occurs cannot be ascertained. But, it does occur I have seen it happen like that

The work which the Jnani does only conduces to the *wellbeing of the world* Whatever a man of realisation says or does contributes to the welfare of all We have minutely observed Sri Ramakrishna, he was as it were देहस्थोऽपि न देहस्थः - "in the body but not of it!" - About the motive of the actions of such personages, only this can be said - लोकवत्तु लीलाकैवल्यम् - "Everything they do like men is simply by way of sport"

Whoever could have thought that the life and teachings of a boy born of poor Brahmin parents in a wayside Bengal village would, in a few years, reach such distant lands as our ancestors never even dreamed of? I refer to Bhagavan Ramakrishna Prof Max Muller has already written an article on Sri Ramakrishna in the "Nineteenth Century."

This is the Message of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world· "Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or churches or temples: they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality, and the more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he. Earn that first, acquire that, and criticise no one, for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words, or names, or sects, but that

it means spiritual realisation. Only those can understand who have experienced. Only those who have attained to spirituality can communicate to others, can be great teachers, of mankind. They alone are the powers of light."

To proclaim and make clear the fundamental unity underlying all religions, was the mission of my Master Other teachers have taught special religions which bear their names, but this great Teacher of the nineteenth century made no claim for himself.

People love me personally But, they little dream that what they love in me is Ramakrishna; without Him I am only a mass of foolish, selfish emotions

CHAPTER IV

THF BARANAGORE MATH AND PERIPATETIC DAYS

A

[illegible]

Nobody. At least, in India, boys are nobodies. Just think of it - a dozen boys telling people vast, big ideas, saying they were determind to work these ideas out in life. Everybody laughed From laughter, it became serious; it became persecution The parents of the boys came to feel like spanking everyone of us And the more we were derided, the more determined we became

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "In the morning and *evening, the mind remains highly imbued with sattva* ideas, those are the times when one should meditate with earnestness "

After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, we went through a lot of religious practice at the Baranagore Math. We used to get up at 3 A M and after washing our face etc. - some after taking bath, and some without it - we would sit in the worship-room and become absorbed in *japam* and meditation. What a strong spirit of dispassion we had in those days!

We had no thought even as to whether the world existed or not. Ramakrishnananda busied himself day and night with the duties pertaining to Sri Ramakrishna's

worship and service, and occupied the same position in the Math as the mistress of the house does in a family. It was he who would procure, mostly by begging, the requisite articles for Sri Ramakrishna's worship and our sustenance. There were days when the Japam and meditation continued from morning till four or five in the afternoon. Ramakrishnanda waited and waited with our meals ready, till at last he would come and drag us from our meditation by sheer force Oh, what a wonderful constancy of devotion we noticed in him!

What was collected by begging and such other means, *was utilised for defraying the Math expenses* Today, both Suresh Babu and Balaram Babu are no more. Had they been alive, they would have been exceedingly glad to see this Math (at Belur) Suresh Babu was in a way the founder of this Math. It was he who used to bear all the expenses of the Barangore Math. It was Suresh Mitra who used to worry most for us in those days. His devotion and faith have no parallel!

Owing to want of funds, I would sometimes fight for closing the Math altogether But, I could never induce Ramakrishnananda *to accede to the proposal...* There were days when the Math was without a grain *of food... If some rice was collected by begging,* there was no salt to flavour it with!

On some days. there would be only rice and salt, but nobody cared about it in the least. We were then being carried away by a tidal wave of spiritual upsurage. Boiled *Nimba* leaves, rice and salt - this was the menu for a

month at a stretch. Oh! Those wonderful days! The austerities of that period were enough to dismay supernatural beings, not to speak of men. But, it is a tremendous truth that if there is real worth in you, the more circumstances are against you, the more will that inner power manifest itself. But the reason why I provided for beds and a tolerable living in the Math is that the Sannyasins that are enrolling themselves nowadays will not be able to bear so much strain as we did. There was the life of Sri Ramakrishna to inspire us, and that was why we did not care much for privation and hardships. Boys of this generation will not be able to *undergo so much hardship. Hence, it is that I have* provided for some sort of habitation and a bare subsistence for them. If they get food and clothing, the boys will devote themselves to religious practice, and will learn to sacrifice their lives for the good of humanity.

Let outside people say anything against this sort of bedding and furniture. Even in jest they will at least once think of this Math. And they say it is easier to attain liberation through cherishing a hostile spirit!

After Sri Ramakrishna's passing away, all forsook us as so many worthless, ragged boys. Only people like Suresh Babu and Balaram Babu were our friends in that hour of need. And we shall never be able to repay our debts to them.

Well, that lady, his (Sri Ramakrishna's) wife, was the only one who sympathised with the idea of those boys. But she was powerless. She was poorer than we were. Never mind! We took the plunge. I

worship and service, and occupied the same position in the Math as the mistress of the house does in a family. It was he who would procure, mostly by begging, the requisite articles for Sri Ramakrishna's worship and our *sustenance.* *There were days when the Japam and* meditation continued from morning till four or five in the afternoon Ramakrishnanda waited and waited with our meals ready, till at last he would come and drag us from our meditation by sheer force. Oh, what a wonderful constancy of devotion we noticed in him!

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believed, as I am living, that these ideas were going to revolutionise India and bring better days to many lands and foreign races. With that belief, came the realisation that it is better that a few persons suffer than that such ideas should die out of this world What if a mother or two brothers die? It is a sacrifice Let it be done. No great thing can be done without sacrifice The heart *must be plucked out and the bleeding heart placed upon* the altar Then great things are done Is there any other way? None have found it. I appeal to each one of you, to those who have accomplished any great thing. Oh, how much it has cost! What agony! what torture! What terrible sufferring is behind every deed of success, in every life! You know that, all of you.

And thus we went on, only a band of boys The only thing we got from those around us was a kick and a curse, that was all

Of course, we had to beg from door to door for our food – got hips and haws – the refuse of everything A piece of bread here and there. We got hold of a broken-down old house, with hissing cobras living underneath; and because that was the cheapest, we went into that house and lived there.

Thus we went on for some years, in the meanwhile making excursions all over India, trying to carry out the idea gradually. Ten years were spent without a ray of light! Ten more years! A thousand times despondency came; but there was one [illegible] to keep us hopeful – the tremendous faith [illegible] each other, the tremen-

dous love among us I have got a hundred men and women around me, if I become the devil himself tomorrow, they will say: "Here we are still! we will never give you up!" That is the great blessing. In happiness, in misery, in famine, in pain, in the grave, in heaven or in hell he, who never gives me up, is my friend Is such friendship a joke? A man may have salvation through such friendship. If we have that faithfulness, why, there is the essence of all concentration You need not worship any gods in the world if you have that faith, that strength, that love Any one that was there was with us all throughout the hard time That made us go from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from the Indus to Brahmaputra

This band of boys began to travel about Gradually we began to draw attention, ninety per cent was antagonism, very little of it was helpful. For we had one fault, – we were boys – in poverty, and with all the roughness of boys

He who has to make his own way in life is a bit rough; he has not much time to be smooth and suave and polite – "my lady and my gentleman," and all that. You have seen that in life, always! He is a rough diamond, he has not much polish, he is a jewel in an indifferent setting

And there we were "No compromise," was the watchword. "This is the ideal and this has got to be realised. If we meet the king, though we die, we must give him a bit of our mind, if the peasant, the same." Naturally, we met with antagonism

believed, as I am living, that these ideas were going to revolutionise India and bring better days to many *lands* and foreign races With that belief, came the realisation that it is better that a few persons suffer than that such ideas should die out of this world. What if a mother or two brothers die? It is a sacrifice Let it be done. *No great thing can be done without sacrifice. The heart* must be plucked out and the bleeding heart placed upon the altar. Then great things are done. Is there any other way? None have found it. I appeal to each one of you, to those who have accomplished any great thing. Oh, how much it has cost! What agony! what torture! What terrible sufferring is behind every deed of success, in every life! You know that, all of you.

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would have to go from house to house to collect sufficient food for one meal. And then the bread was so hard, it made my mouth bleed to eat it Literally, you can break your teeth with that bread. Then I would put it in a pot and pour river water over it For months and months, I lived that way – of course, it told on the health

He who has a dogged determination like that shall have everything .It is because we had such a determination that we have attained the little that we have Otherwise, what dire days of privation we had to pass through! One day for want of food I fainted in the outer platform of a house on the roadside, and quite a shower of rain drenched my head before I recovered my senses Another day, I had to do odd jobs in Calcutta for the whole day without food, and had my meal on my return to the Math at ten or eleven in the night. And these were not solitary instances.

I worked for fulfiling the purpose for which the Lord (Sri Ramakrishna) came He gave me the charge of them all (the youngsters) , who will contribute to the great wellbeing of the world, though most of them are not yet aware of it They are each a centre of religious power and in time that power will manifest itself

The disciples of Jesus were all Sannyasins. The direct recipients of the grace of Sankara, Ramanuja, Sri Chaitanya and Buddha were all renouncing Sannyasins It is men of this stamp who have been spreading the Brahma-vidya in the world.. In Veda, Vedanta. Itihasa

But, mind you, this is life's experience. If you really want the good of others the whole universe may stand against you, but cannot hurt you It must crumble before the power of the Lord Himself in you, if you are sincere and really unselfish. And those boys were that. *They came as children, pure and fresh from the hands* of nature. Said our Master, "I want to offer at the altar of the Lord only those flowers that have not even been smelt, fruit that have not been touched with the fingers" The words of the great man sustained us all. For he saw *through the future life of those boys that he collected* from the streets of Calcutta, so to say People used to laugh at him when he said, "You will see – this boy, that boy, what he becomes" His faith was unalterable "Mother showed it to me I may be weak, but when She says this is so She never makes mistakes, it must be so"

So things went on and on for ten years without any light, but with our health breaking down all the time

It tells on the body in the long run- sometimes one meal at nine in the evening, another time a meal at eight in the morning, another after two days, another, after three days – and always the poorest and roughest thing Who is going to give to the beggar the good things he has? And then they have not much in India And most of the time walking, climbing snow peaks, sometimes ten miles of hard mountain climbing just to get a meal. They eat unleavened bread in India, and sometimes they have it stored away for twenty or thirty days, until it is harder than bricks; and then they will give a crumb of that. I

body, we are immersed in meditation and austerities in mountains and forests.

Referring to history, we see that only that fragment which is fit will survive and what makes fit to surviv but *character*?...

Let me tell you a little personal experience. Wh my Master left the body, we were a dozen penniless an unknown young men Against us were a hundred powe ful organisations, struggling hard to nip us in the bu But Ramakrishna had given us one great gift, the desi

fire. Ten years ago, I could not get a hundred perso together to celebrate his birthday anniversary In 18 there were fifty-thousand

His thoughts and his message were known to ve few capable of giving them out Among others, he lef few young boys who had renounced the world, and we ready to carry on his work Attempts were made crush them But they stood firm, having the inspirati of that great life before them. Having had the cont of that blessed life for years, they stood their grou These young men living as Sannyasins, begged throu the streets of the city where they were born, althou some of them came from high families. At first, th met with great antagonism, but they persevered and w on from day to day spreading all over India the mess of that great man, until the whole country was filled w the ideas he had preached.

(history) Purana (ancient tradition), you will find everywhere that the Sannyasins have been the teachers of Religion in all ages and climes. History repeats itself. It will also be likewise now. The capable Sannyasin children of Sri Ramakrishna, the teacher of the great synthesis of religions, will be honoured everywhere as the teacher of men.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "Whoever has prayed to God sincerely for one day must come here." Know each of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna to be of great spiritual power. Do not think them to be ordinary souls. They will be the source of the awakening of spirituality in people. Know them to be part of the spiritual body of Sri Ramakrishna, who was the embodiment of infinite religious ideas. I look upon them with that eye. See Brahmananda – even I have not the spirituality which he has. Sri Ramakrishna looked upon him as his spiritual son and he lived and walked, ate and slept with him. He is the ornament of our Math - our King. Similarly Premananda, Turiyananda, Trigunatita, Akhandananda, Saradananda, Ramakrishnananda, Subodhananda and others.

To create a band of men who are tied and bound together with the most undying love in spite of differences, is it not wonderful? This band will increase.

The ways, movements and ideas of our Master were all cast in a new mould, so we are also of a new type. Sometimes dressed like gentlemen, we are engaged in *lecturing*; at other times, throwing all aside, with "Hara, Hara, Aum, Aum," on the lips, ash smeared on the

body, we are immersed in meditation and austerities in mountains and forests.

Referring to history, we see that only that fragment which is fit will survive and what makes fit to survive but *character*?..

Let me tell you a little personal experience When my Master left the body, we were a dozen penniless and unknown young men Against us were a hundred powerful organisations, struggling hard to nip us in the bud. But Ramakrishna had given us one great gift, the desire, and the lifelong struggle, not to talk alone, but to *live the life*. And today all India knows and reverences the Master, and the truths he taught are spreading like wildfire. Ten years ago, I could not get a hundred persons together to celebrate his birthday anniversary In 1894, there were fifty-thousand

His thoughts and his message were known to very few capable of giving them out Among others, he left a few young boys who had renounced the world, and were ready to carry on his work Attempts were made to crush them But they stood firm, having the inspiration of that great life before them Having had the contact of that blessed life for years, they stood their ground. These young men living as Sannyasins, begged through the streets of the city where they were born, although some of them came from high families At first, they met with great antagonism, but they persevered and went on from day to day spreading all over India the message of that great man, until the whole country was filled with the ideas he had preached.

I am not taking pride in this. But, mark you, I have told the story of that group of boys. Today, there is not a village, not a man, not a woman in India that does not know their work and bless them. There is not a famine in the land where these boys do not plunge in and try to work and rescue as many as they can

I believed, and still believe that without my giving up the world, the great mission which Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, my great Master, came to preach, would not see the light; and where would those young men be who have stood as bulwarks against the surging waves of *materialism and luxury of the day? These have done* a great deal of good to India, especially to Bengal. and this is only the beginning With the Lord's help, they will do things for which the whole world will bless them for ages So on the one hand my vision of the future Indian religion and that of the whole world, my love for the millions of beings sinking down and down for ages with nobody to help them, nay nobody with even a thought for them, on the other hand, making those who are nearest and dearest miserable. I chose the former and "*Lord will do the rest.*" *He is with me, I am sure of* that, if of anything. So long as I am sincere, nothing can resist me because He will be my help Many and many *in India* could not understand me, and how could they, poor men? Their thoughts never strayed beyond the everyday routine business of eating and drinking ... But appreciation or no appreciation, I am born to organise these [illegible] And this I will do or die.

We are a unique company Nobody amongst us has a right to force his faith upon others . ...Many of us do not believe in any form of idolatry ... What harm is there in worshipping the Guru when that Guru was a hundred times more holy than even the historical Prophets all taken together? If there is no harm in worshipping Christ, Krishna, or Buddha, why should there be any harm in worshipping this man who never did or thought anything unholy, whose intellect only through intuition stands head and shoulders above all the other Prophets because they were all one-sided?

25-3-1887 - I have attained my present state of mind as a result of much suffering and pain I now realise that without trials and tribulations, one cannot resign oneself to God and depend on Him absolutely

I have noticed a peculiar thing Some objects or places make me feel as if I had seen them before in a previous birth They appear familiar to me One day I went to Sarat's house on Amherst Street Immediately I said to Sarat "This house seems familiar to me. It seems to me that I have known the rooms, the passages, and the rest of the house for many, many days"

April 9, 1887 - Now and then I feel great scepticism.

At Baburam's house it seemed to me that nothing existed, as if there were no such thing as God.

Whatever spiritual discipline we are practising here (Baranagore Math) is in obedience to the Master's command But it is strange that Ram Babu criticises us

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laughter, he told me of the fun the boys and he had been having throwing the stones. "So the Father plays," he said

Many of these men hide, in order to guard themselves against intrusion People are a nuisance to them. One had human bones strewn about his cave, and gave it out that he lived on corpses. Another threw stones; and so on.

Sometimes the thing comes upon them in a flash. There was a boy, for instance, who used to come to read the Upanishads with Abhedananda One day, he turned and said, "Sir, is all this really true?" "Oh, Yes!" said Albhedananda, "It may be difficult to realise, but it is certainly true" And next day, that boy was a silent Sannyasin, nude, on his way to Kedarnath!

Baranagore 19-11-1888 — A good deal of study is given to Sanskrit scriptures in this Math This Math is not wanting in men of perseverence, talent and penetrative intellect

Baghbazar 28-11-1888 — I had an attack of fever again I am ailing much

Baranagore: 4-2-1889 — I am going now on a pilgrimage to the place of my Master's nativity, and after a sojourn of few a days there, I shall present myself at Banaras.

22-2-1889 — I had intended to go to Banaras and I planned to reach there after visiting the birthplace of my Master. But, unluckily, on the way to that village, I had

an attack of high fever followed by vomiting and purgi
as in cholera There was again fever after three or fo
days

Baghbazar (Calcutta) 21-3-1889 — I am very i
at present, there is fever now and then, but there is n
disorder in the spleen or other organs I am unde
homeopathic treatment Now I have to give up comple
tely the intention of going to Banaras Whatever Go
dispenses will happen, later on according to the state o
the body... My going there is very uncertain.

4-7-1889 — Some relative of my former life (i.
the life which I have renounced) has purchased a bunga
low at Simultala (near Baidyanath - Bihar) The place
being credited with a healthy climate, I stayed there for
some time. But the summer heat growing excessive, I
had an attack of acute diarrhoea, and I have just fled
away from the place By the will of God, the last six or
seven years of my life have been full of constant struggles
with hindrances and obstacles of all sorts I have been
vouchsafed the ideal Shastra, I have seen the ideal man;
and yet I fail myself to get on with anything to the end —
this is my profound misery

I see no chance of success, while remaining near
Calcutta. In Calcutta, my mother and two brothers live,
I am the eldest; the second is preparing for the first Arts,
exam, and the third is young.

They were quite well off before, but since my father's
death, it is going very hard with them — they even have to
go fasting at times! To crown all, some relatives taking

advantage of their helplessness drove them away from the ancestral residence Though a part of it is recovered through law suits at the High Court, destitution is now upon them, a matter of course in litigation

Living near Calcutta, I have to witness their adversity, and the quality of *Rajas* prevailing, my egotism sometimes develops into the form of a desire that rises to plunge me into action, in such moments, a fierce fighting ensues in my mind Now their law suit has come to an end

Simla, Cal 14-7-89 - My difficulties here have almost come to a close, only I have engaged the services of a broker for the sale of a piece of land, and I hope the sale will be over soon In that case, I shall be free from all worry

Baranagore 7-8-89 - Had an attack of fever ..... and suffered again for the last ten days, now I am doing well

17-8-89 - I have no partiality for any party in this caste question, because I know it is a social law and is based on diversity of *Guna* and *Karma.* It also means grave harm if one, bent on going beyond *Guna* and *Karma*, cherishes in mind any caste distinctions In these matters, I have got some ideas through the grace of my Guru

Baghbazar 3-12-89 - Two of my brother-disciples are shortly leaving for Banaras One is Rakhal (Brahmananda) by name, the other is Subodh (Subodhananda). The first named was beloved of my Master and used to stay much with him

Gangadhar is now proceeding to Kailas. The Tibe-tans wanted to slash him up on the way, taking him t be a spy of the foreigners Eventually some Lamas kind*ly set him free, his physical endurance has grown immen*sely - one night he passed uncovered on a bed of snow and that without much hardship

But there is the chain of iron, and there is the chai of gold Much good *comes of the latter, and it drops o*f by itself when all the good is reaped The sons of m Master are indeed the great objects of my service, and here alone I feel I have some duty left for me Perhaps I shall send brother K, down to Allahabad or somewhere *else as convenient*

Baidyanath· 24-12-1889 *- I have been staying fo*r the last few days at Baidyanath in Purna Babu's lodge I am suffering from indigestion probably due to excess of iron in the water I leave for Banaras tomorrow

My idea is to remain there for some time, and to watch how Viswanath and Annapurna deal out my lot. *And my resolve is something like "either to lay* down my life or realise my ideal" -

Allahabad· 30-12-1889 — I was to go to Banaras, but news reached me that a brother-disciple, Yogananda by name, had been attacked with small-pox after arriving here from a pilgrimage to Chitrakuta Omkarnath etc., and so I came to this place to nurse him.

Ghazipur 21-1-90 — I reached Ghazipur three . .... Here I am putting up in the house of Bab

Satish Chandra Mukherjee, a friend of my early age. The place is very pleasant Close by flows the Ganges I again had a great mind to go over to Kashi (Banaras), but the object of my coming here, namely, an interview with the Babaji (Pavahari Baba, the great saint), has not yet been realised

Ghazipur· 30-1-90 — Of the few places I have recently visited, this is the healthiest The few days I passed at Banaras, I suffered from fever day and night .. I have visited Pavahari Baba's house - there are high walls all round, and it is fashioned like an English bungalow There is a garden inside and big rooms, chimneys etc He allows nobody to enter If he is so inclined, he comes up to the door and speaks from inside - that is all One day I went and waited and waited in the cold and had to return After a few days' stay at Banaras, I shall start for Hrishikesh.

It is so very difficult to meet Babaji He does not step out of his home

4-2-90 — Through some good fortune, I have obtained an interview with Babaji A great sage indeed! It is all very wonderful, and in this atheistic age, a towering representation of marvellous power born of Bhakti and Yoga! I have sought refuge in his grace, and he has given me hope - a thing very few may be fortunate enough to obtain. It is Babaji's wish that I stay on for some days here, and he would do me some good So following the saint's bidding, I shall remain here for some time......... Unless one is face to face with the life of such men, faith in the scriptures does not grow in all its real integrity

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I am not leaving this place soon as it is impossible to turn down Babaji's request

A pain in the loins is giving me much trouble

7-2-90 - Apparently in his features, the Babaji is Vaishnava the embodiment so to speak, of Yoga, Bhakti and humility. His dwelling has walls on all sides with a few doors in them Inside these walls there is one long underground burrow wherein he lays himself up in Samadhi He talks to others only when he comes out of the hole *Nobody knows what he eats, and so they call him* Pavahari Baba (i e one living on air) Once he did not come out of the hole for five years, and people thought he had given up the body But, now again he is out. This time, however he does not show himself to people and talks from behind the door Such sweetness in speech I have never come across! He does not give a direct reply to questions but says What does this servant know?" But then fire comes out as the talking goes on. On my pressing him very much he said, 'Favour me highly by staying here some days " But he never speaks in this way; so from this I understood he meant to reassure me, and whenever I am importunate, he asks me to stay on. So I wait and hope. He is a learned man no doubt, nothing in the line betrays itself He performs scriptural ceremonials, for from the full-moon day to the last day of the month, sacrificial oblations go on So it is sure he is not retiring into the hole during this period

13-2-90 - I am having some sort of pain in the loins which being aggravated of late, gives much trouble. For

two days I could not go out to meet Babaji, and so a man came from him to enquire about me. For this reason, I go today. . . . Such amazing endurance and humility I have never seen

14-2-90 - I have heard from Brother Gangadhar. He is now in Rambag Samadhi, Srinagar, Kashmir. I am greatly suffering from lumbago . . Rakhal and Subodh have come to Brindaban after visiting Omkar, Girnar, Abu, Bombay and Dwaraka

25-2-90 - The lumbago is giving a good deal of trouble It is three days since I came away from Babaji's place, but he enquires of me kindly almost every day.

February 90 - Brother Kali is having repeated attacks of fever at Hrishikesh I have sent him a wire from this place So if from the reply I find I am wanted by him, I shall be obliged to start direct for Hrishikesh from this place, otherwise, I go to Banaras Weaving all this web of Maya? - and that is no doubt the fact

PAVAHARI BABA

I once knew a Yogi, a very old man, who lived in a hole in the ground all by himself. All he had was a pan or two to cook his meals in He ate very little and wore scarcely anything and spent most of his time meditating

With him all people were alike He had attained to non-injuring What he saw in everything, in every person, in every animal was the Soul, the Lord of the universe. With him, every person and every animal was

secret of this wonderful initiation for shame, and carried out to the best of his ability the injunction of his master. Thus, a whole sect of nose-cut saints spread over the country. Do you want me to be the founder of another such?"

Later on, in a more serious mood, another query brought the answer: "Do you think that physical help is the only help possible? Is it not possible that one mind can help other minds even without the activity of the body?"

When asked on another occasion, why he, a great Yogi, should perform Karma, such as pouring oblations into the sacrificial fire, and worshipping the image of Sri Raghunathji, which are practices only meant for beginners, the reply came, "Why do you take for granted that every-[illegible] makes Karma for his own good? Cannot one per-[illegible] Karma for others?"

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One of his great peculiarities was his entire absorption in the task in hand, however trivial. The same amount of care and attention was bestowed on cleaning a copper pot, as on the worship of Sri Raghunathji, he himself being the best example of the secret he once told us of work, "*The means should be loved and cared for as if it were the end itself.*"

His humility was not kindred to that which means pain and anguish of *self-abasement. It sprang naturally* from the realisation of that which he once so beautifully explained to us: "O king, the Lord is the wealth of those

who have nothing - yes, of those," he continued, "who have thrown away all desires of possession, even that of one's own soul "

In appearance he was tall and rather fleshy, had but one eye, and looked much younger than his real age His voice was the sweetest we have ever heard The present writer owes a deep debt of gratitude to the departed saint and dedicates these lines however, unworthy, to the memory of one of the greatest Masters he has loved and served

Ghazipur· March 1890 - I am staying with Pavaharıjı, the wonderful Raja-Yogin, and he has given me some hopes, too There is a beautiful bungalow in a small garden belonging to a gentleman here I mean to stay there The garden is quite close to the Babaji's cottage A brother of the Babaji stays there to look after the comforts of the sadhus, and I have my Bhiksha at his place Hence, with a view to seeing to the end of this fun, I give up for the present my plan of going to the hills Let me wait and see what Babaji will give me

My motto is to learn whatever good things I may come across anywhere This leads many friends to think that it will take away my devotion to the Guru

After Sri Ramakrishna's leaving the body, I associated for some time with Pavhari Baba of Ghazipur. There was a garden not far distant from his Ashrama where I lived People used to say it was a haunted garden, but I am a sort of demon myself and have not much fear of ghosts. In that garden there were many lemon trees

Ghazipur 3-3-90 – The lumbago obstinately refuses to leave me, and the pain is very great For the last few days I haven't been able to go to see Pavhariji, but out of his kindness he sends every day for my report, but, now I see the whole matter is inverted in its bearings! While I myself have come as a beggar at his door, he turns round and wants to learn of me! This saint perhaps is not yet perfected - too much of works, vows, observances, and too much of self-concealment

By my stay here, I have been cured of all other symptoms of malaria, only the pain in the loins make me frantic, day and night it is aching and chafes me very much . I find wonderful endurance in Babaji, and that is why I am begging something of him, but no inkling of the mood to give, only receiving and receiving! So, I also fly off

To no big person am I going any longer. "Remain, O mind, within yourself etc," Says the poet Kamalakanta

So now the great conclusion is that Ramakrishna has no peer, nowhere else in this world exists that unprecedented perfection, that wonderful kindness for all, that does not stop to justify itself, that intense sympathy for the man in bondage Either he must be an Avatara as he himself used to say, or else the ever-perfected divine man of whom the Vedanta speaks as the Free One who assumes a body for the good of humanity. This is my conviction sure and certain, and the worship of such a divine man has been referred to by Patanjali in the aphorism:

"Or the goal may be attained by meditating upon a heart" (Patanjali Darshan, Aphorism 1.37 [illegible]). The mind becomes calm when meditating on a person unattached to sense objects.)

* *Ghazipur* 3-3-90 - I am a very soft-hearted man in spite of the stern Vedantic views I hold. And this proves to be my undoing. At the slightest touch I give myself away; for however I may try to think only of my own good, I slip off in spite of myself to think of other people's interests. This time it was with a very stern resolve that I set out to pursue my own good, but I had to run off at the news of the illness of a brother at Allahabad. And now comes this news from Hrishikesh, and my mind has run off with me there.

15-3-90 - I am leaving this place tomorrow. Let me see which way destiny leads!

31-3-90 - I haven't been here for the last few days and am again away today. I have asked brother Gangadhar to come here and if he comes, we go over to Benares together. For some special reason, I shall continue to stay in secret in a village some distance off this place. The news of his arrival is not yet received and his health being bad, I am very anxious for his sake. I have behaved very cruelly towards him – that is, I have harassed him much to make him leave my company. There is no help...... I am so very weak-hearted, so much overmastered by the distractions of love!... What shall I say about the condition of my mind! Oh, it is as if the hell-fire is burning there day and night! Nothing,

nothing could I do yet! And this life seems muddled away in vain. I feel quite helpless as to what to do! The Babaji throws out honeyed words and keeps me from leaving Ah, what shall I say? I am... a man driven mad with mental agonies Abhedananda is suffering from dysentery .. My Gurubais must be thinking me very cruel and selfish Oh, what can I do? Who will see deep down into my mind? Who will know how much I am suffering day and night? My lumbago is as before

2-4-90 - My salutations to Pramada Babu, his is a friendship which greatly benefits both my mind and body And I am particularly indebted to him Things will turn up some way, anyhow

Baranagore 10-5-90 - Directly the hot weather relaxes a little I am off from this place but I am still at a loss where to go

Baghbazar, Cal 26-5-90 - I am Ramakrishna's slave, having laid my body at his feet "with *til* and *tulsi* leaves" I cannot disregard his behest (If it is in failure that that great sage laid down his life after having attained to superhuman heights of Jnana, Bhakti, Love and Powers and after having practised for forty years stern renunciation, non-attachment, holiness and great austerities, then where is there anything for us to count on?) So, I am obliged to trust his words as the words of one identified with Truth

Now his behest to me was that I should devote myself to the service of the Order of all-renouncing devotees founded by him, and in this, I have to persevere,

come what may, being ready to take heaven, hell, salvation or anything that may happen to me.

His command was that his all-renouncing devotees should group themselves together and I am entrusted with seeing to this Of course, it matters not if anyone of us goes out on visits to this place or that, but these shall be but visits, while his own opinion was that absolute homeless wandering suited him alone who was perfected to the highest point. *Before that state, it is proper to settle somewhere to dive down into practice*

So in pursuance of this his commandment, his group of Sannyasins are now assembled in a dilapidated house at Baranagore, and two of his lay disciples, Babu Suresh Chandra Mitra and Babu Balaram Bose, so long provided for their food and house-rent

For various reasons the body of Bhagavan Ramakrishna had to be consigned to fire The remains of his ashes are now preserved, and if they can be now *properly enshrined somewhere on the banks of the* Ganges, I presume we shall be able in some measure to expiate the sin lying on our head These sacred remains, his seat and his picture are everyday worshipped in our Math in proper form, a brother-disciple of mine, of Brahmin parentage, is occupied day and night with the task. The expenses of the worship used also to be borne by the two great souls mentioned above

What greater regret there can be than this that no memorial could yet be raised in this land of Bengal in the very neighbourhood of the place where he lived his life of sadhana - *he by whose birth the race of Bengalees has*

been sanctified, the land of Bengal has become hallowed, he who came on earth to save the Indians from the spell of the wordly glamour of Western culture, and who, therefore, chose most of his all-renouncing disciples from university men?

The two gentlemen mentioned above had a strong desire to have some land purchased on the banks of the Ganges and see the sacred remains enshrined on it, with the disciples living there together; and Suresh Babu had offered a sum of Rs 1,000/- for the purpose, promising to give more, but for some inscrutable purpose of God, he left this world yesternight! And Balaram Babu's death has already occurred

Now there is no knowing as to where his disciples will stand with his sacred remains and his seat The disciples are Sannyasins and are ready forthwith to depart anywhere their way may lie But, I, their servant, am in an agony of sufferings, and my heart is breaking to think that a small peice of land could not be had in which to install the remains of Bhagavan Ramakrishna.

I have not the slightest qualm to beg from door to door for this noble cause, for the sake of my Lord and his Children... To my mind, if all these sincere, educated youthful Sannyasins of good birth fail to live up to the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna owing to want of an abode and help, then alas for our country!

If asked "You are a Sannyasin, so why do you trouble over these desires?" – I would then reply, "I am Ramakrishna's servant, and I am willing even to steal and

rob, if by doing so, I can perpetuate his name in the land *of his birth and sadhana, and help even a little his* disciples to practise his great ideals... I have returned to Calcutta for this reason.

Baghbazar, Cal. 4-6-90 - It is quite true that the Lord's Will will prevail. We are spreading out here and there in small groups of two or three. I got two *letters from Brother Gangadhar* He is at present in the house of Gagan Babu, suffering from an attack of influenza. Gagan Babu is taking special care of him He will come here as soon as he recovers

6-7-90 - I had no wish to leave Ghazipur this time, and certainly not to come to Calcutta, but Kali's illness *made me go to Banaras, and Balaram's sudden death* brought me to Calcutta So, Suresh babu and Balaram Babu have both gone! G C Ghosh is supporting the Math.. I intend shortly, as soon as I can get my fare, to go up to Almora and thence to some place in Gharwal on *the Ganges* where I can settle down *for a long meditation* Gangadhar is accompanying me. Indeed it was with this desire and intention that I brought him down from Kashmir.

I am in fine health now.

I was once travelling in the Himalayas and the long road stretched before us We poor monks connot get any one to carry us, so we had to make all the way on foot. There was an old man with us The way goes up and *down* for hundreds of miles, and when that old monk [illegible], he said, "Oh, Sir, how to cross

it? I cannot walk any more, my chest will break." I said to him, "Look down at your feet" He did so, and I said, "The road that is under your feet is the road that you see before you; it will soon be under your feet" The highest

[illegible]

nature Be strong, get beyond all superstition, and be free.

Many times I have been in the jaws of death, starving, footsore, and weary, for days and days I had had no food, and often could walk no further, I would sink down under a tree, and life would seem ebbing away I could not speak, I could scarcely think, but at last the mind reverted to the idea "I have no fear of death, I never hunger or thirst. I am it, I am it, the whole of nature cannot crush me, it is my servant Assert thy strength, Thou Lord of Lords and God of Gods! Regain Thy lost empire! Arise and walk and stop not!" and I would rise up, re-invigorated, and here am I, living today

Real monasticism is not easy to attain. There is no order of life so rigorous as this If you stumble ever so little, you are hurled down a precipice - and are smashed to pieces One day I was travelling on foot from Agra to Vrindaban There was no *farthing* with me I was about a couple of miles from Vrindaban, when I found a man smoking on the roadside and I was seized with a desire to smoke. I said to the man, "Hello, will you let me have a puff at your *chillum?*" He seemed to be hesitating greatly and said, "Sir, I am a sweeper!" Well, there was the influence of the old *samskaras*, and I

immediately stepped back and resumed my journey without smoking I had gone a short distance when the thought occurred to me that I was a Sannyasin who had renounced caste, family, prestige and everything and still I drew back as soon as the man gave himself out as a sweeper, and could not smoke the chillum touched by him! The thought made me restless at heart then I had walked on half a mile Again, I retraced my steps and came to the sweeper whom I found still sitting there. I hastened to tell him, "Do prepare a *chillum* of tobacco for me, my dear friend" I paid no heed to his objection and insisted on having it So, the man was compelled to prepare a *chillum* for me Then I gladly had a puff at it and proceeded to Vrindaban

You find that in every religion, mortifications and asceticisms have been practised In these religious conceptions the Hindus always go to the extremes. I once saw a man who had kept his hands raised in this way, and I asked him how it felt when he did it first He said it was awful torture It was such a torture that he had to go to a river and put himself in water, and that allayed the pain for a little while After a month, he did not suffer much Through such practices, powers (Siddhis) can be attained

When I was in Jaipur, I met a great grammarian and [illegible] a desire to study Sanskrit grammar with him. at [illegible]ough he was a great scholar in that branch, he had foot [illegible] aptitude for teaching. He explained to me the and du[illegible] on the first aphorism for three days contisaw what [illegible] I could not grasp a bit of it On the fourth

day, the teacher got amazed and said, "Swamiji, I could not make you understand the meaning of the first aphorism even in three days, I fear, you will not be much benefited by my teaching" Hearing these words, a great self-reproach came over me Putting food and sleep aside, I set myself to study the commentry on the first aphorism independently Within three hours the sense of the commentary stood explained before me as clearly as anything Then going to my teacher, I gave him the sense of the whole commentary My teacher, hearing me said, "How could you gather the sense so excellently within three hours, which I failed to explain to you in three days?" After that, every day, I began to read chapter after chapter, with great ease Through concentration of mind everything can be accomplished - even mountains can be crushed to atoms

In Malabar . the women lead in everything Exceptional cleanliness is apparent everywhere, and there is the great impetus to learning When I myself was in that country, I met many women who spoke good Sanskrit, while in the rest of India, not one woman in a million can speak it

Once while I was putting up at Manmatha Babu's place (in Madras), I dreamt one night that my mother had died My mind became much distracted Not to speak of correspondence with anybody at home, I used to send no letters in those days even to our Math, (at Baranagore) The dream being disclosed to Manmatha, he sent a wire to Calcutta to ascertain facts about the matter. For the dream had made my mind uneasy on the

one hand, and on the other, our Madras friends with all arrangements ready, were insisting on my departing for America immediately, and I felt rather unwilling to leave before getting any news of my mother. So Manmatha, who discerned this state of my mind suggested our repairing to a man living some way off from town, who having acquired mystic powers over spirits could tell fortunes, and read the past and future of man's life So at Manmatha's request and to get rid of my mental suspense, I agreed to go to this man Covering the distance partly by railway and partly on foot, we four of us - Manmatha, Alasinga, myself and another - managed to reach the place, and what met our eyes there was a man with ghoulish, haggard, sootblack appearance, sitting close to a cremation ground His attendents used some Madrassi dialect to explain to us that this was the man with perfect power over the ghosts At first, the man took absolutely no notice of us, and then, when we were about to retire from the place, he made a request to us to wait

Our Alasinga was acting as the interpreter and he explained the request to us Next, the man commenced drawing some figures with a pencil, and presently I found him getting perfectly still in mental concentration Then, he began to give out my name, my genealogy, the history of my long line of forefathers, and said that Sri Ramakrishna was keeping close to me all through my wanderings, intimating also to me good news about my mother. He also foretold that I would have to go very soon to far-off lands for preaching religion. Getting good news thus about my mother, we all travelled back to town, and after arrival there, received by wire from

Calcutta the assurance of mother's doing well. Everything that the man had foretold came to be fulfilled to the letter, call it some fortuitous occurrence or anything you will

I know very little of this science (of mind), but for the little that I gained, I worked for thirty years of my life, and for six years I have been telling people the little that I know It took me thirty years to learn it, thirty years of hard struggle. Sometimes I worked at it twenty -hours during the twenty-four Sometimes I slept only one hour in the night, sometimes I worked whole nights, sometimes I lived in places where there was hardly a sound, hardly a breath sometimes I had to live in caves Think of that And yet I know little or nothing I have barely touched the hem of the garment of this science. But, I can understand that it is true and vast and wonderful

I have met some who told me they did remember their previous life They had reached a point where they could remember their former incarnations

When I became a Sannyasin I consciously took the step, knowing that this body would have to die of starvation What of that, I am a beggar My friends are poor. I love the poor, I welcome poverty. I am glad that I sometimes have to starve

In the course of my wanderings, I was in a certain place where people came to me in crowds and asked for instruction. Though it seems almost unbelievable, people came and made me talk for three days and nights without

one hand, and on the other, our Madras friends with all arrangements ready, were insisting on my departing for America immediately, and I felt rather unwilling to leave before getting any news of my mother So Manmatha, who discerned this state of my mind suggested our repairing to a man living some way off from town, who having acquired mystic powers over spirits could tell fortunes, and read the past and future of man's life So at Manmatha's request and to get rid of my mental suspense, I agreed to go to this man Covering the distance partly by railway and partly on foot, we four of us - Manmatha, Alasinga, myself and another - managed to reach the place, and what met our eyes there was a man with ghoulish, haggard, sootblack appearance, sitting close to a cremation ground His attendents used some Madrassi dialect to explain to us that this was the man with perfect *power over the ghosts At first, the man took absolutely* no notice of us, and then, when we were about to retire from the place, he made a request to us to wait

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acquainted with the Maharajah, I told him of the noble act of this man Accordingly, within a few days the latter was called to the presence of the prince. Frightened beyond words, the man came shaking all over, thinking that some dire punishment was to be inflicted upon him. But the Maharajah praised him and put him beyond all want.

O, the days of suffering I passed through! Once after eating nothing for three days, I fell down senseless on the road I did not know how long I was in that state When I regained my consciousness I found my clothing wet through a shower of rain. Drenched in it, I felt somewhat refreshed I arose, and after trudging along some distance, I reached a monastery, and my life was saved by the food I received there.

I find that whenever I have made a mistake in my life, it has always been because *self* entered into the calculation, where self has not been involved, my judgement has gone straight to the mark

I had from before a desire to go to Chicago When at Madras, the people there of their own accord, in conjunction with the H H of Mysore and Ramnad, made every arrangement to send me up. Between the H H of Khetri and myself there exist the closest ties of love. Well, I, as a matter of course, wrote to him that I was going to America. Now the Raja of Khetri thought in his love that I was bound to see him once before I departed, especially as the Lord gave him an heir to the throne and great rejoicings were going on there...and to

giving me a moment's rest They did not even ask me whether I had eaten On the third night, when all the visitors had left, a lowcaste poor man came up to me and said, "Swamiji, I am much pained to see that you have not had any food these three days You must be very tired and hungry Indeed, I have noticed that you have not even taken a glass of water!" I thought that the Lord Himself had come in the form of this lowcaste man to test me. I asked him, "Can you give me something to eat?" The man said, "Swamiji, my heart is yearning to give you food, but how can you eat *chapaties* baked by my hands, If you allow me, I shall be most glad to bring flour, lentils, and other things and you may cook them yourself" At that time, according to the monastic rules I did not touch fire So I said to him, 'You had better give me the *chapaties* cooked by you I will gladly take them." Hearing this, the man shrank in fear, he was a subject of the Maharajah of Khetri and was afraid that if the latter came to hear that he, a cobbler, had given *Chapatis* to a Sannyasin, he would be severely dealt with and possibly banished from the State I told him, however, that he need not fear and the Maharajah would not punish him He did not belive me But out of the kindness of his heart, even though he feared the consequence, he brought me the cook
that time whether it would have
Indra, a King of the Devas, shou
rectar in a golden basin before
and gratitude and thought, "The
hearted m
lowcastes

and the other for 10 minutes at the most when he talked about the system of education here. Of course, I have seen the library and the pictures of Ravi Varma and that is about all worth seeing here So, I am going off this evening to Bombay... At Nadiad, I met Mr. Manilal Nanubhai He is a very learned and pious gentleman and I enjoyed his company much

Poona 15-6-92 - I came down with the Thakore Saheb of Mahabaleshwar and I am living here with him I would remain here a week or more and then proceed to Rameshwar *via* Hyderabad . I saw the Surti tutor to the Prince of Bhavnagar - He is a perfect gentleman It was quite a privilege to make his acquaintance, he is so good and noble-natured a man

Bombay: 22-8-92 - Yesterday I saw Mr. Manabhashukharam who has lodged a Sannyasi friend with him He is very kind to me and so is his son... After remaining here for 15 or 20 days I would proceed towards Rameshwar

Hyderabad 21-2-93 - A young graduate came to receive me at the station, and also a Bengali gentleman, At present I am living with the Bengali gentleman, (father of late Sarojini Naidu-Dr Aghorenath Chatterjee) tomorrow, I go to live with the young friend for a few days and then I see the different sights here, and in a few days expect to be at Madras......I cannot bear heat at all So the next thing I would do would be to go back to Bangalore and then to Ootacamund to pass the summer there My brain boils in heat.

make sure of my coming he sent his Private Secretary all the way to Madras to fetch me

There were my Gurubhais at Junagad...Of them one is our leader *I met them after three years and we came* together as far as Abu and then I left them.

Margoa 1893 - I reached here safe. I went to visit Panjim and a few other villages and temples nearby. I returned just today I have given up the intention of visiting Gokarna, Mahabaleswar and other places. I start for Dharwar by the morning train tomorrow. Doctor Yogdekar's friend was very hospitable to me The town of *Panjim is very neat and clean. Most of the Christians* here are literate. The Hindus are mostly uneducated.

You see, in my travels through India all these years, I have come across many a great soul, many a heart overflowing with loving kindness, sitting at their feet I used to feel a mighty current of strength coursing into my heart, and the few words I tell you are only through the force of that current gained by coming in contact with them *Do not think I am myself something great!*

Abu: 30-4-91 - The two Commander Sahebs .. being men of high position were very kind to a poor Fakir like me.

Baroda: 26-4-92- I had not the least difficulty in reaching the house (of Sri Haridas Viharidas Desai, Dewan of Junagad) from the station of Nadiad...Mr. Manibhai has provided every comfort for me...As to his company, I have only seen him

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CHAPTER V.

THE DIVINE CALL AND THE CHICAGO PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

I do not take into any consideration whether peopl accept Sri Ramakrishna's name or not, but I am ready t lay down my life to help his teachings, his life and hi message spread all over the world

I am called by the Lord for this I have been dragged through a whole life full of crosses and tortures. I have seen the nearest and dearest die, almost of starvation: I have been ridiculed, distrusted, and have suffered for my sympathy for the very men who scoff and scorn me

I do not care for liberation, or for devotion, I would rather go to a hundred thousand hells, "doing good to others (silently) like the spring" - this is my religion

Yes, my own life is guided by the enthusiasm of a certain great personality, but what of that? Inspiration was never filtered out to the world through one man!

It is true I believe Ramakrishna Paramahamsa to have been inspired. But then I myself am inspired also.

I belong as much to India as to the world .What country has any special claim on me? Am I any nation's slave?

I see a greater Power than man, or God, or devil, at my back

I do not believe in any politics God and truth are the only politics in the world, everything else is trash.

Truth is my God, the universe my country

Before proceeding to America, I wrote to Mother (Sri Sarada Devi) to bless me Her blessings came and at one bound, I cleared the ocean

1893 The Parliament of Religions is being organised for this (pointing to himself) - My mind tells me so. You will see it verified at no distant date

Bombay 24-5-93 - Arrangements are all ready for my starting for America on the 31st next. The Private Secretary to the Maharajah of Khetri has come here to see me off

I want to give them dry, hard reason, softened in the sweetest syrup of love and made spicy with intense work and cooked in the kitchen of Yoga, so that even a baby can easily digest it -

To put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry philosophy and intricate Mythology and queer startling psychology, a religion which shall be easy, simple popular, and at the same time, meet the requirements of the highest minds - is a task only those can understand who have attempted it The abstract Advaita must become living - poetic in everyday life, out of hopelessly intricate Mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering Yogi-ism must come the most scientific and practical psychology - and all this must be put in a form that a child may grasp it; that is my life's work.

From Bombay we reached Colombo Our steamer remained in port nearly the whole day, and we took th

opportunity of getting off to have a look at the town. We drove through the streets and the only thing I remember was a temple in which there was a gigantic *Murti* (image) of the Lord Budha in a reclining posture, entering Nirvana

The next station was Penang, which is only a strip of land along the sea in the body of the Malay Peninsula. On our way from Penang to Singapore, we had glimpses of Sumatra with its high mountains, and the captain pointed out to me several places as the favourite haunts of pirates in days gone by.

Singapore has a fine botanical garden with the most splendid collection of palms The beautiful fan-like palm called the traveller's palm, grows here in abundance, and the breadfruit tree is everywhere The celebrated mangosteen is as plentiful here as mangoes in Madras, but mango is *nonpareil* Singapore possesses a fine museum, too

Hong Kong next Yon feel you have reached China, the Chinese element predominates so much All labour, all trade seems to be in their hands And Hong Kong is real China. As soon as the steamer casts anchor, you are besieged by hundreds of Chinese boats to carry you to the land These boats with two helms are rather peculiar. The boatman lives in the boat with his family Almost always the wife is at the helms managing one with her hands and the other with one of her feet. And in ninety per cent cases, you find a baby tied to her back, with the hands and feet of the little Chin left free. It is a quaint sight to see the l

quietly from his mother's back, while she is now setting with might and main, now pushing heavy loads, or jumping with wonderful ability from boat to boat And there is such a rush of boats and steam launches com in and going out, Baby John is every moment put into risk of having his little head pulverised, pigtail and but he does not care a fig This busy life seems to h no charm for him, and he is quite content to learn anatomy of a bit of rice cake given to him from time time by the madly busy mother The Chinese child quite a philosopher, and calmly goes to work at an when your Indian boy can hardly crawl on all fours.

Hong Kong is a very beautiful town It is built the slopes of hills and on the tops too, which are m cooler than the city There is an almost perpendic tramway going to the top of the hill, dragged by wire-r and steam-power.

We remained three days at Hong Kong and wen see Canton, which is eighty miles up a river Wh scene of bustle and life! What an immense numbe boats almost covering the waters! And not only t that are carrying on the trade, but hundreds of ot which serve as houses to live in And quite a lot of t so nice and big In fact, they are big houses two or t stories high, with verandahs running round, and st between and all floating

We landed on a strip of ground given by the Ch Government to foreigners to live in. Around us on sides of the river for miles and miles is the big cit

wilderness of human beings, pushing, struggling, surgi[illegible] roaming. But, with all its population, all its activity, it[illegible] the dirtiest town I saw. Yet not a speck of filth [illegible] allowed by the Chinese to go waste, every house is a shop people living only on the top-floor. The streets are very very narrow, so that you almost touch the shops on both sides as you pass.

I went to see several temples. The biggest in Canton is dedicated to the memory of the first Buddhistic Emperor, and the five hundred first disciples of Buddhism The central figure is of course Buddha, and next beneath Him, is seated the Emperor, and ranging on both sides are the statues of the disciples, all beautifully carved out of wood

From Canton back to Hong Kong, and thence to Japan The first port we touched was Nagasaki. We landed for a few hours and drove through the town. What a contrast! The Japanese are one of the cleanliest peoples on earth Everything is neat and tidy. Their streets are all broad, straight and regularly paved. Their little houses are cagelike, and their pine-covered ever green little hills form the background of almost every town and village. Japan is the land of the picturesque! Almost every house has a garden at the back, very nicely laid out according to Japanese fashion with small shrubs, grass-plots, small artificial waters and small stone bridges

[illegible] Nagasaki to Kobe. Here I gave up the steamer [illegible] land route to Yokohama, with a view to see [illegible] of Japan.

I have seen three big cities in the interior - Osaka, a great manufacturing town, Kioto, the former capital, and Tokyo, the present capital Tokyo is nearly twice the size of Calcutta with nearly double the population

The match factories are simply a sight to see

I saw quite a lot of temples In every temple, there are some Sanskrit Mantras written in old Bengali characters Only a few of the priests know Sanskrit But they are an intelligent sect

I have heard in Japan that it was the belief of the girls of that country that their dolls would be animated if they were loved with all their heart The Japanese girl never breaks her doll

There in Japan you find a fine assimilation of knowledge...They have taken everything from the Europeans, but they remain Japanese all the same, and have not turned Europeans They are great as a nation because of their art

And one special feature about them (the Japanese) is this that while in Europe and elsewhere Art generally [illegible]

is entirely different from what you see in Ceylon. It is the same as *Vedanta*. It is positive and theistic Buddhism

I hold the Mahayana to be older of the two schools of Buddhism

The theory of Maya is as old as the Rik Samhita The Shvetashvatara Upanishad contains the world "Maya". I hold that Upanishad to *be at least older than* Buddhism

I have had much light of late about Buddhism, and I am ready to prove

1. That Shiva worship in various forms antedated the Buddhists, that the Buddhists tried to take hold of the sacred places of the Shaivas but failing in that, made *new places in the precincts just as you find now at* Bodh-Gaya and Sarnath (Benares).

2. The story in the Agni-Purana about Gayasura does not refer to Budha at all - as Dr Rajendralal will have it - but simply to a pre-existing story

3. Gaya was a place of ancestor-worship already, and foot-print worship the Buddhists copied from the *Hindus.*

4 That Buddha went to live on Gaya-sirsha mountain *proves* the pre-existence of the place

5. About Banaras, even the oldest records go to prove it as the great place of Shiva-worship etc. etc

In China and Japan, on the walls of all temples I have observed various monosyllabic Mantrams written in big gilt letters, which approach the Bengali characters so much *that you could easily make out the resemblance*

I thought, *I have tried India, it is time for me to try*
time the Parliament of

Religions was to be held, and someone was to be sent from India I was just a vagabond, but I said, "If you send me, I am going I have not much to lose, and I don't care if I lose that." It was very difficult to find the money, but after a long struggle, they got together just enough to pay for my passage - and I came - came one or two months earlier, so that I found myself drifting about in the streets here, without knowing anybody

That I went to America was not my doing, or your doing, but the God of India, who is guiding her destiny sent me

In view specially of the poverty and ignorance (in India), I had no sleep At Cape Comorin, sitting in Mother Kumari's temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock - I hit upon a plan the first thing we need is men, and the next is funds Through the grace of the Guru, I was sure to get men I next travelled in search of funds. I have come to America to earn money myself and then return to my country, and devote the rest of my days to the realisation of this one aim of my life

Metcalf (Mass U.S A) 20-8-1893 - From Japan I reached Vancouver The way was by the Northern Pacific It was very cold and I suffered much for want of warm clothing However, I reached Vancouver anyhow, and thence went through Canada to Chicago I remained about 12 days in Chicago And almost everyday I used to go to the Fair. It was a tremendous affair. The lady to whom Varada Rao introduced me, and her husband, belong to the highest Chicago society, and they were so very kind to me. I took my departure from

Chicago and came to Boston. Mr Lulloobhoy was with me up to Boston He was very kind to me.

The expense I am bound to run into here is awful. *On an average it costs me £1 everyday, a cigar costs eight annas of our money The Americans are so rich that they spend money like water, and by forced legislation keep up the price of everything so high that no other nation on earth can approach it Every common coolie earns nine or ten rupees a day, and spends it All those rosy ideas we had before starting have melted,* and I have now to fight against impossibilities A hundred times I had a mind to go out of the country and go back to India But, I am determined and I have a call from above, I see no way, but His eyes see And I must stick to my guns, life or death...

Just now I am living as the guest of an old lady in a *village near Boston I accidently made her acquaintance in the railway train, and she invited me to come over and live with her I have an advantage in living with her,* saving for some time my expenditure of £1 per day, and she has the advantage of inviting her friends over here, and showing them a curio from India! And all this must be borne. Starvation, cold, hooting in the streets on account of my quaint dress, these are what I have to fight against. But, my dear boy, no great things were ever done without great labour.

This is the land of Christians, and any other influence than that is almost zero. Nor do I care a bit for the enmity of any "ists" of the world I am here amongst

the children of the Son of Mary, and the Lord Jesus wi help me They like much the broad views of Hinduisi and my love for the Prophet of Nazareth. I tell thei I preach nothing against the Great One of Galilee I onl ask the Christians to take in the Great Ones of Indi along with the Lord Jesus, and they appreciate it

Yesterday, Mrs Johnson, the lady superintendent (the women's prison, was here They don't call it prisc but reformatory It is the grandest thing I have seen i America. How the inmates are benevolently treate how beautiful, you must see to believe! And, oh, ho my heart ached to think of what we think of the poo the low in India They have no chance, no escape, no way to climb up The poor, the low, the sinner in India have no friends, no help - they cannot rise, try however they may. They sink lower and lower everyday, they feel the blows showered upon them by a cruel society, and they do not know whence the blow comes They *have forgotten that they too are men* *Thoughtful people* within the last few years have seen it, but unfortunately laid it at the door of the Hindu religion, and to them the only way of bettering is by crushing this grandest religion of the world Hear me, my friend, I have discovered the secret through the grace of the Lord Religion is not at fault. On the other hand, your religion teaches you that every being is only your own self multiplied But it was the want of practical application, the want of sympathy – the want of heart. The Lord once more came to you as Buddha and taught you how to feel, how to sympathise with the poor, the miserable, the sinner, but you heard him not...

I have travelled twelve years with this load in t
heart and this idea in my head. I have gone from do
to door of the so-called rich and great...

With a bleeding heart I have crossed half the worl
to this strange land, seeking for help The Lord is grea
I know He will help me

From the village Breezy Meadows, I am going t
Boston tomorrow I am going to speak at a big Ladies
Club there, which is helping Ramabai...People gather
by hundreds in the streets to see me So what I want is
to dress myself in a long black coat, and keep a red robe
and turban to wear when I lecture This is what they
advise me to do

In America, there are no classes in the railway except
in Canada So, I have to travel first class, as that is the
only class, but I do not venture in the 'Pullmans' They
are very comfortable - you sleep, eat drink even bathe
in them just as if you were in a hotel - but they are too
expensive

It is very hard work getting into society and making
yourself heard...After such a struggle I am not going to
give up easily. Rome was not built in a day...I hope
everything will come right I am trying my best to find
one plank I can float upon

Metcalf, Mass*: *Aug. 20, 93 - I am going to speak before a large society of ladies in *Salem* on Monday. And that will introduce me to many more.

I do not know whether I shall go back to Chicago or not My friends there wanted me to represent India and the gentleman whom V introduced me to is one of the Directors of the Fair. But, I refused as I would have to spend all my little stock of money in remaining more than a month in Chicago

Salem (USA)* *30-8-93 - I am going off from here today. I have received an invitation with full directions from Mr Sanborn So I am going to Saratoga on Monday

Salem . Sept 4, 93 - I have received a letter from Mr Theles of Chicago giving the names of some of the delegates and other things about the Congress

Mr Sanborn has written to me to come over to Saratoga on Monday (6th) and I am going accordingly. I would stop then at a boarding house called Sanatorium.

I am the first monk to come over to these western countries It is the first time in the history of the world that a Hindu monk crossed the ocean.

When I, a poor, unknown, friendless Sannyasin was going to America, going beyond the waters to America without any introductions or friends there, I called on the leader of the Theosophical Society. Naturally I thought, he being an American and a lover of India, perhaps, would give me a letter of introduction to some-

I have travelled twelve years with this load in heart and this idea in my head. I have gone from do to door of the so-called rich and great ..

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From the village Breezy Meadows I am going Boston tomorrow. I am going to speak at a big Ladie Club there which is helping Ramabai. People gath by hundreds in the streets to see me. So what I want to dress myself in a long black coat and keep a red rob and turban to wear when I lecture. This is what the advise me to do.

In America there are no classes in the railway excep in Canada. So I have to travel first class as that is the only class but I do not venture in the Pullmans. The are very comfortable — you sleep eat drink even bathe in them just as if you were in a hotel — but they are too expensive.

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body there He asked me,, "Will you join my society "No", I replied, "How can I? For I do not believe most of your doctrines " 'Then, I am sorry I cannot d anything for you," he answered That was not pavin the way for me I reached America through the help of few friends in Madras I arrived in America sever months before the Parliament of Religions began, Th money I had with me was little, and it was soon spent Winter approached and I had only thin summer clothes I did not know what to do in that cold, dreary climate for if I went to beg in the streets, the result would be that I would be sent to jail There I was with the last few dollars in my pocket

I sent a wire to my friends in Madras This came to be known to the Theosophists, and one of them wrote, "Now the devil is going to die, God bless us all" Was that paving the way for me? I would not have mentioned this, but as my countrymen wanted to know, it must come out For three years I have not opened my lips about these things Silence has been my motto, but, today the thing has come out That was not all I saw some Theosophists in the Parliament of Religions, and I wanted to talk and mix with them I remember the looks of scorn which were on their faces as much as to say, ."What business has this worm to be here in the midst of the Gods?"

Chicago : 20-9-93 – I came here to seek aid for my improverished people, and I fully realised how difficult it was to get help for the heathen from Christians in a Christian land

I must try to the end First I will try in America, and if I fail, I will try in England, if I fail there, too, I can go back to India, and wait for further commands from On High

It must be particularly remembered that the same ideals and activities do not prevail in all societies and countries Our ignorance of this is the main cause of much of the hatred of one nation towards another. It is very harmful, it is the cause of half the unchantableness found in the world When I came to this country (America) and was going through the Chicago Fair, a man from behind pulled at my turban I looked back and saw that he was a very gentlemanly looking man, neatly dressed I spoke to him, and when he found that I knew English he became very much abashed On another occasion, in the same Fair, another man gave me a push When I asked him the reason, he also was ashamed and stammered out an apology saying, "Why do you dress that way!" The sympathies of these men were limited within the range of their own language and their own fashion of dress Much of the oppression of powerful nations on weaker ones is caused by this prejudice It dries up their fellow feeling for fellow-men. That very man who asked me why I did not dress as he did and wanted to ill-treat me because of my dress, may have been a very good man, a good father and a good citizen; but the kindliness of his nature died out as soon as he saw a man in a different dress!

Before I knew the customs of this country (America) I received such a shock when the son, in a very refined

family, got up and called the mother by name! However, I got used to that. But with us (in India) we never pronounce the name of our parents, when they are present.

I belong to an Order very much like what you have in the Mendicant Friars of the Catholic Church; that is to say, we have to go about without very much in the way of dress and beg from door to door, live thereby, preach to people when they want it, sleep where we can get a place — that way we have to follow. And the rule is that the members of this Order have to call every woman "mother". Coming to the West, that old habit remained and I would say to ladies, "Yes mother," and they were horrified. I couldn't understand why they should be horrified. Later on, I discovered the reason: because that would mean that they were old!

Power comes to him who observes unbroken Brahmacharya for a period of twelve years, with the sole object of realising God. I have practised that kind of Brahmacharya myself, and so a screen has been removed, as it were, from my brain. For that reason, I need not any more think over or prepare myself for any lectures on a subtle subject as philosophy. Suppose I have to lecture tomorrow, all that I shall speak about will pass tonight before my eyes like so many pictures, and the next day, I put into words during my lecture all those things that I saw.

Chicago. *2-10-93* – I dropped on the Congress in the eleventh hour, and quite unprepared, and that kept me very busy for some time. I was speaking almost everyday in the Congress. The Congress is now over.

I was so afraid to stand before that great assembly of fine speakers and thinkers from all over the world and speak, but the Lord gave me strength and I almost everyday heriocally faced the audience If I have done well, He gave me the strength for it

Prof Bradley was very kind to me and he always cheered me on And oh ! everybody is so kind here to me who am nothing Glory unto *Him* in the highest in whose sight the poor ignorant monk from India is the same as the learned divines of this mighty land And how the Lord is helping me every day of my life - I sometimes wish for a life of million ages to serve Him through the work dressed in rags and fed by charity.

Here were some of sweet ones from India - the tender-hearted Buddhist Dhammapal and the orator Mazoomdar.

Col Higginson, a very broad man, was very sympathetic to me I am going to Evanston tomorrow and hope to see Prof Bradley there

At first in America I was almost out of water. I was afraid I would have to give up the accustomed way of being guided by the Lord and cater for myself - and what a horrid piece of mischief and ingratitude was that. I now clearly see that He who was guiding me on the snow tops of the Himalayas and the burning plains of India is here to help me and guide me. *Glory unto Him*

•

in the highest So I have calmly fallen in my old ways. Somebody or other gives me a shelter and food and somebody or other comes to ask me to speak about Him and I know He sends them and mine is to obey. And then He is supplying my necessities, and His will be done.

So it is in Asia, so in Europe, so in America, so in the deserts of India, so in the rush of business in America, for is He not here also?

Oh, He is so full of fun He is always playing. Sometimes with great big balls which we call the sun and earth, sometimes with little children, and laughing How funny to see Him and play with Him!

When I come to Chicago, I always go to see Mr and Mrs Lyons, one of the noblest couples I have seen here

Chicago : 10-10-93 – Just now I am lecturing about Chicago, and I am doing, as I think, very well – it ranging from 30 to 80 dollars a lecture and just now have been so well advertised in Chicago gratis by the Parliament of Religions Yesterday I returned from Streater where I got 87 dollers for a lecture I have engagements every day this week.

So I want to go to work earnestly for my own project only keeping the project in the backround and working like any other lecturer.

He who has brought me hither and has not left me yet will not leave me ever Of course, I am too green in the business (of getting money), but would soon learn the trade I am very popular in Chicago. So I want to stay here a little more and get money

Tomorrow, I am going to lecture on Buddhism at the ladies' fortnightly club - which is the most influential in this City I think the success of my project probable.

2-11-93 - At a village near Boston, I made the acquaintance of Dr Wright, Professor of Greek in the Harvard University He sympathised with me very much and urged upon me the necessity of going to the Parliament of Religions, which he thought would give me an introduction to the nation As I was not acquainted with anybody, the Professor undertook to arrange everything for me and eventually I came back to Chicago. Here the oriental and occidental delegates to the Parliament of Religions and I were all lodged in the house of a gentleman

On the morning of the opening of the Parliament, we were all assembled in a building called the Art Palace, where one huge and other smaller temporary halls were rented for the sittings of the Parliament. Men from all nations were there From India were Mazoomdar of the Brahmo Samaj, and Nagarkar of Bombay, Mr. Gandhi representing the Jains, and Mr Chakravarti

representing Theosophy with Mrs Annie Besant. Of these, Mazoomdar and I were, of course, old friends, and Chakravarti knew me by name. There was a grand procession, and we were all marshalled on to the platform

Imagine a hall below and a huge gallery above, packed with six or seven thousand men and women representing the best culture of the country, and on the platform learned men of all the nations of the earth. And I, who never spoke in public in my life, to address this august assemblage! It was opened in great form with music and ceremony and speeches, then the delegates were introduced one by one, and they stepped up and spoke Of course, my heart was fluttering and my tongue nearly dried up I was so nervous, and could not venture to speak in the morning Mazoomdar made a nice speech, Chakravarti a nicer one, and they were much applauded They were all prepared and came with ready-made speeches I was a fool and had none, but bowed down to Devi Saraswati, and stepped up, and Dr. Barrows introduced me I made a short speech I addressed the assembly as "Sisters and Brothers of America,"—a deafening applause of two minutes followed and then I proceeded and when it was finished I sat down, almost exhausted with emotion. The next day all the papers announced that my speech was the hit of the day, and I became known to the whole of America. Truly has it been said by the great commentator Sridhara 'मूकं करोति वाचालम् " "Who maketh the dumb a fluent speaker." His name be praised! From that day I became a celebrity and the day I read my paper on Hinduism, the

hall was packed as it had never been before. I quote from one of the papers. "Ladies, ladies, ladies packing every place–filling every corner, they patiently waited and waited while the papers that separated them from Vivekananda were read,' etc. Suffice it to say that whenever I went on the platform a defeaning applause would be raised for me Nearly all the papers paid high tributes to me, and even the most bigoted had to admit that "This man with his handsome face and magnetic presence and wonderful oratory is the most prominent figure in the Parliament' etc ....

I have no more wants now I am well off, and all the money that I require to visit Europe I shall get from here...

Many of the handsomest houses in this city are open to me All the time I am living as a guest of somebody or other

The Lord will provide evrything for me.. Day by day I am feeling that the Lord is with me, and I am trying to follow His direction His will be done We will do great things for the world, and that for the sake of doing good and not for name and fame

It is a great art to press the largest amount of thought into the smallest number of words. Even,—'s paper had to be cut very short More than a thousand papers were read, and there was no time to give to wild perorations I had a good long time given to me over the ordinary half hour, because the most popular speakers were always put down last, to hold the audience. And

Lord bless them what sympathy they have, and what patience! They would sit from ten o' clock in the morning to ten o' clock at night—only a recess of half an hour for a meal, and paper after paper read, most of them very trivial, but they would wait and wait to hear their favourite

Dharmapala of Ceylon was one of the favourites... He is a very sweet man, and we became very intimate during the Parliament

Lecturing is a very profitable occupation in this country and sometimes pays well. Mr Ingersoll gets five to six hundred dollars a lecture. *He is the most celebrated lecturer in this country*

I spoke at the Parliament of Religions with what *effect I may quote to you from a few newspapers* and magazines ready at hand I need not be self-conceited, but I say that no Hindu made such an impression in America, and if my coming has done anything, it has done this *that the Americans have come to know that* India even today produces men at whose feet even the most civilized nations may learn lessons of religion and morality. Don't you think that is enough to say for the Hindu nation sending over here *their* Sannyasin?...

These I quote from the journals "But eloquent as were many of the *brief* speeches, no one expressed as well the *spirit* of the Parliament (of Religions) and its limitations as the Hindu monk. I copy his address in full but I can only [illegible] effect upon the audience [illegible] orator [illegible] is strong intelli-

gent face in its pictureque setting of yellow and orange was hardly less interesting than these earnest words and the rich rhythmical utterance he gave them" (here the speech is quoted in extenso) - *New York Critique.*

"He has preached in clubs and churches until his faith has become familiar to us His culture, his eloquence and his fascinating personality have given us a *new idea of Hindu civilisation* His fine, intelligent face and his deep musical voice, prepossessing one at once in his favour . He speaks without notes, presenting his facts and his conclusions with the greatest art and the most convincing sincerity, and rising often to rich inspiring eloquence" *Ibid*

"Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions After hearing him, we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation " *Herald* (the greatest paper here)

I cease from quoting more lest you should think me conceited

I am the same here as in India, only here in this highly cultured land there is an appreciation, a sympathy. There our people grudge us monks a crumb of bread, here they are ready to pay one thousand rupees a lecture and remain grateful for the instructions for ever I am appreciated by these strangers more than I was ever in India I can, if I will, live here all my life in the greatest luxury, but I am a Sannyasin, and "India, with all thy faults I love thee still" So, I am coming back (to India) and go on sowing the seeds of religion and progress from city to city, as I was doing so long

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What a wonderful achievement was the world's Fair at Chicago! And that wonderful Parliament of Religions where voices from every corner of the earth expressed their religious ideas! I was also allowed to present my own ideas through the kindness of Dr. Barrows and Mr Bonney Mr Bonney is such a wonderful man! Think of that mind that planned and carried out with great success that gigantic undertaking, and he, no clergyman, but a lawyer presiding over the dignitaries of all the churches, the sweet, learned, patient Mr Bonney with all his soul speaking through his eyes

At the Parliament of Religions (in America) there came among others, a young man, a Negro born, a real African Negro, and he made a beautiful speech I became [illegible]

[illegible]

me, this boy was the son of a Negro chief who lived in the heart of Africa, one day another chief became angry with the father of this boy and murdered him and murdered the mother also, and they were cooked and eaten, he ordered the child also to be killed and cooked and eaten, but the boy fled, and after passing through great hardships and having travelled a distance of several hundreds of miles, he reached the sea-shore, and then he was taken into an American vessel and brought over to America. And this boy made that speech!

> Do your work with one hand and touch the feet of the Lord with the other when you have no work in the world to do, hold His feet fast to your breast with both your hands-
>
> -Sri RAMAKRISHNA

> "Ours not to reason why, ours but to do and die" Be of good cheer and believe that we are selected by the Lord to do great things and we will do them -
>
> -SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Now after these quotations, do you think it wa worthwhile to send a Sannyasin to America? Please d not publish it I hate notoriety in the same manner a I did in India.

I am doing the Lord's work, and wherever He lead I follow.

He who makes the dumb eloquent and the lame cross a mountain, He will help me I do not care for human help He is ready to help me in India, in America, on the North Pole, if He thinks fit If He does not, none else can help me Glory unto the Lord for ever and ever!

The parliament of Religions was organised with the *intention of proving the superiority of Christian religion* over other forms of faith, but the Philosophic religion of Hinduism was able to maintain its position not-withstanding

The Parliament of Religions was a failure from the Christian standpoint But the Chicago Parliament was a tremendous success for India and Indian thought It helped on the tide of Vedanta, which is flooding the world. *The American people, of course, minus the* fanatical priests and Church-women, are very glad of the results of the Parliament

Of the name by which I am now known (Swami *Vivekananda), the first is descriptive of a Sannyasin, or* one who formally renounces the world, and the *second* is the title I assumed-as is customary wit[illegible]
on my renunciation of the world, it s

What a wonderful achievement was the world's Fair at Chicago! And that wonderful Parliament of Religions where voices from every corner of the earth expressed their religious ideas! I was also allowed to present my own ideas through the kindness of Dr Barrows and Mr Bonney Mr Bonney is such a wonderful man! Think of that mind that planned and carried out with great success that gigantic undertaking, and he, no clergyman, but a lawyer presiding over the dignitaries of all the churches, the sweet, learned, patient Mr Bonney with all his soul speaking through his eyes

At the Parliament of Religions (in America) there came among others, a young man, a Negro born, a real African Negro, and he made a beautiful speech I became interested in the young man, and now and then talke him, but could learn nothing about him But one d England, I met some Americans and this is what they me, this boy was the son of a Negro chief who lived i heart of Africa, one day another chief became a with the father of the boy and murdered him murdered the mother also, and they were cooked eaten, he ordered the child also to be killed and co and eaten; but the boy fled, and after passing thr great [illegible] travelled a distance of se h

CHAPTER VI

MARCH OF EVENTS

As our country is poor in social virtues, so this ountry (America) is lacking in spirituality. *I give them pirituality, and they give me money. I do not know* .ow long I shall take to realise my end I shall try to atry out my plans or die in the attempt You may erhaps think what Utopian nonsense all this is! You ittle know what is in me. Gurudeva will show me the vay out.

I have heard many stories about the American home f liberty running into licence, of unwomanly women *mashing under their feet all the peace and happiness* of ome-life in their mad liberty-dance and much nonsense f that type And now after a year's experience of American homes, of American women, how utterly false nd erroneous that sort of judgement appears! American *women! A hundred lives would not be sufficient to pay* y deep debt of gratitude to you! I have not words nough to express my gratitude to you.

Last year I came to this country in summer, a randering preacher of a far distant country, without ame, fame, wealth, or learning to recommend me- iendless, helpless, almost in a state of destitution *And merican women befriended me, gave me shelter* and ood, took me to their homes and treated me as their wn son, their own brother. They stood as my friend ven when their own priests were trying to persuade em to *give up the "dangerous heathen"-even when*

day after day their best friends had told them not stand by this "unknown foreigner, maybe, of danger character " But they are better judges of character soul-for it is the pure mirror that catches the reflectic

And how many beautiful homes I have seen, I many mothers whose purity of character, whose unsel love for their children are beyond expression, how m daughters and pure maidens, "pure as the icicle Diana's temple" and withal with much culture, educa and spirituality in the highest sense! Is America t full of only wingless angels in the shape of women There is good and bad everywhere true, but a nation is not to be judged by its weaklings, but by the good, the noble and the pure

And then the modern American women I admire their broad and liberal minds

There are thousands of women here (in America) whose minds are as pure and white as the snow of this country And look at our girls (of India), becoming mothers below their teens!"

I have travelled all over India, and seen this country, too "Admist all the scriptures and Puranas, know this statement of Vyasa to be true, that doing good to others conduces to merit, and doing harm to them leads to sin."

"Fifty years ago," said Ingersoll to me, "You would have been hanged in this country if you had come to preach You would have been burnt alive or you would have been stoned out of the villages."

CHAPTER VI
MARCH OF EVENTS

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I have heard many stories about the American home of liberty running into licence, of unwomanly women smashing under their feet all the peace and happiness of home-life in their mad liberty-dance and much nonsense of that type And now after a year's experience of American homes, of American women, how utterly fals and erroneous that sort of judgement appears! America women! A hundred lives would not be sufficient to pa my deep debt of gratitude to you! I have not word enough to express my gratitude to you

Last year I came to this country in summer, a wandering preacher of a far distant country, without name, fame, wealth, or learning to recommend me-friendless, helpless, almost in a state of destitution And American women befriended me, gave me shelter and food, took me to their homes and treated me as their own son, their own brother. They stood as my friend even when their own priests were trying to persuade them to give up the "dangerous heathen"-even when

day after day their best friends had told them not to stand by this "unknown foreigner, maybe, of dangerous character " But they are better judges of character and soul-for it is the pure mirror that catches the reflection

And how many beautiful homes I have seen, how *many mothers whose purity of character, whose unselfish* love for their children are beyond expression, how many daughters and pure maidens, "pure as the icicle on Diana's temple" and withal with much culture, education and spirituality in the highest sense! Is America then full of only wingless angels in the shape of women? There is good and bad everywhere true, but a nation is not to be judged by its weaklings, but by the good, the noble and the pure

And then the modern American women - I admire their broad and liberal minds

There are thousands of women here (in America) whose minds are as pure and white as the snow of this country. And look at our girls (of India), becoming mothers below

When I came into this country (America), I was surprised to meet so many liberal men and women. But after the Parliament of Religions, a great Presbyterian paper came out and gave me the benefit of a seething article. This the editor called enthusiasm

I pity the Hindu who does not see the beauty in Jesus Christ's character I pity the Christian who does not reverence the Hindu Christ

Detroit 12-3-94 – I am now living with Mr Palmer He is a very nice gentleman. I spoke at an opera house for two hours and a half People were very much pleased I am going to Boston and New York., I am not going to lecture in Michigan Mr Holden tried to persuade me this morning to lecture in Michigan . To tell the truth the more I am getting popularity and facility in speaking the more I am getting *fed up* My last address was the best I ever delivered Mr Palmer was in ecstasies and the audience remained almost spell-bound, so much so *that it was after the lecture that I found I had spoken* so long

15-3-94 – The funniest thing said about me here was in one of the papers which said, "The cyclonic Hindu has come, and is a guest with Mr. Palmer . . .. ". The first lecture was not properly managed, the cost of the *hall being 150 dollars.*

I am pulling on well with old Palmer He is a very jolly, good old man. I got only 127 dollars by my last lecture I am going to speak again in Detroit on Monday.

Mr Palmer makes me laugh the whole day

This mixing with hundreds of varieties of the human animals has disturbed me I will tell you what is to my taste, I cannot write and I cannot speak, but I can think deeply, and when I am heated, can speak fire It should be, however, to a select, a very select few

Just because this assertion of independence, this proving that man is ***not a machine,*** is the essence of all religious thought, it is impossible to think of it in the routine mechanical way It is this tendency to bring everything down to the level of a machine that has given the West its wonderful prosperity And it is this which has driven away all religion from its doors. Even the little that is left, the West has reduced to a systematic drill

Detroit. 17-3-94 – I have returned today to Mrs Bagley's as she was very sorry that I should remain so long with Mr Palmer In Palmer's house, there was real 'good time' He is a real jovial heartwhole fellow.

18-3-94 – There was a letter from my brethren at Calcutta and it was written on the occasion of a private invitation to celebrate the birthday of my Master The letter says that Mazoomdar has gone back to Calcutta and is preaching that Vivekananda is committing every sin under the sun in America.. This is your America's ***wonderful spiritual man!*** It is not their fault; until one is really spiritual, that is, until one has got a real insight into the nature of one's own soul and has got a glimpse of the world of the soul, one cannot

inguish chaff from seed, tall talk from depth and to
]. I am sorry for poor Mazoomdar that he should stoop
ow! Lord bless the old boy!

*The address inside the letter is in English and is my
old name written by a companion of my child-hood
o has also taken orders. It is a very poetic name.
at written in the letter is an abbreviation, the full
ne being Narendra, meaning the "Chief of men"
ara' means man and 'Indra' stands for ruler in
el - very ludicrous isn't it? But such are the names
our country we cannot help, but I am glad I have
en that up*

Chicago 19-3-94 - I have no wants in this country,
t mendicancy has no vogue here and I have to labour,
at is, lecture in places. It is as cold here as it is hot.
e summer is not a bit less hot than at Calcutta. And
w to describe the cold in winter! The whole country
covered with snow, three or four feet deep, nay, six or
ven feet, at places! In the southern parts there is no
ow. Snow, however, is a thing of little consideration
re. For it snows when the mercury stands at 32
grees F. In Calcutta, it scarcely comes down to 60
grees, and it rarely approaches zero in England. But
re your mercury sinks to *minus* 4 or 5 degrees. In
anada, in the north, *mercury becomes condensed,* when
ey have to use the alcohol thermometer.

When it is too cold, that is, when the mercury
ands even below 20 deg. F., *it does not snow. I used*
o think that *it must be* an exceedingly cold day on
hich the snow falls. But it is not so; it snows on

comparatively warm days. Extreme cold produces a sort of intoxication; no carriages would run; only the sledge, which is without wheels, slides on the ground! Everything is frozen stiff - even an elephant can walk on rivers and canals and lakes The massive Falls of Niagara of such tremendous velocity, are frozen to marble!!! But, I am doing nicely I was a little afraid at first, but necessity makes me travel by rail to the borders of Canada one day, and the next day finds me lecturing in South America! The carriages are kept quite warm, - like your own room, by means of steam pipes, and all round are masses of snow, spotlessly white, - oh the beauty of it!

I was mortally afraid that my nose and ears would fall off, but to this day they are all right I have to go out, however, dressed in a heap of warm clothing surmounted by a furcoat No sooner you breathe out than the breath freezes among the beard and moustache! Notwithstanding all this, the fun of it is that they won't drink water without putting a lump of ice into it. This is because it is warm indoors Every room and the staircase are kept warm by steam pipes They are first and foremost in arts and appliances, foremost in enjoyment and luxury, foremost in making money, and foremost in spending it. The daily wages of a coolie are six rupees as also are those of a servant; you cannot hire a cab for less than three rupees, nor get a cigar for less than four annas. A decent pair of shoes costs twenty-four rupees and a suit, rupees five hundred As they earn, so they spend A lecture fetches two hundred to three thousand rupees I have got up to five hundred.

Of course, now I am in the very heyday of fortune. They like me, and thousands of people come to hear me speak.

As it pleased the Lord, I met here Mr. M-. He was very cordial at first, but when the whole Chicago population began to flock to me in overwhelming numbers, then grew the canker in his mind !.. The priests tried their utmost to snub me But the Guru is with me, what could anybody do? And the whole American nation loves and respects me, pays my expenses, and reveres me as a Guru It was not in the power of the priests to do anything against me Moreover, they are a nation of scholars What they want is philosophy, learning and empty talk will no more do

Nowhere in the world are women like those of this country. How pure, independent, self-relying and kind-hearted! It is the women who are the life and soul of this country All learning and culture are centred in them.

This is a very funny country It is now summer—this morning it was as hot as April in Bengal, but now it is as cold as February at Allahabad! So much fluctuation within four hours! The hotels of this country beggar description For instance there is a hotel in New York where a room can be hired for up to Rs 5,000 - a day, excluding board charges —Not even in Europe is there a country like this in point of luxury It is indeed the richest country in the world. I seldom live in hotels, but am mostly the guest of big people here To them I am a widely known man. The whole country knows me now, so wherever I go they receive me with open arms into their homes. Mr. H's home is my centre in Chicago

I scarcely find a family so highly pure and kind Oh, how wonderfully kind they are!

As for lectures and so forth, I don't prepare them beforehand Only one I wrote out The rest I deliver off-hand, whatever comes to my lips—Gurudeva backs me up Once at Detroit I held forth for three hours at a stretch Sometimes I myself wonder at my own achievement – to think that there was such stuff in this pate!

A friend criticised the use of European terms of philosophy and religion in my addresses I would have been very glad to use Sanskrit terms, it would have been much more easy, as being the only perfect vehicle of religious thought But the friend forgets that I was addressing an audience of western people, and although a certain Indian Missionary declared that the Hindus had forgotten the meaning of their Sanskrit books, and that it was the *missionaries* who *unearthed the meaning*, I could not find one in that large concourse of Missionaries who could understand a line in Sanskrit–and yet some of them read learned papers criticising the Vedas, and all the sacred sources of the Hindu religion!

Detroit 30-3-94 – I am very glad to receive the Khetri letter.. He (the Raja) wants some newspaper clippings. Mrs Breed wrote to me a stiff burning letter first, and then I got a telegram from her inviting me to be her guest for a week. Before this, I got a letter from Mrs Smith of New York writing on her behalf and another lady Miss Helen Gould and another Dr, asking me to come over to New York. As the Lynn

Club wants me on the 17th of next month. I am going to New York first and come in time for their meeting at Lynn.

Next summer if I do not go away and Mrs. Bagley insists I should not – I may go to Annisquam where Mrs. Bagley has engaged a nice house Mrs. Bagley is a very spiritual lady and Mr Palmer a spiritual gentleman but very good.. I am all right in nice health of body and mind.. Mrs. Sherman has presented me with a lot of things, amongst which is a nail-set and letter holder an little satchel, etc etc Although I objected, especiall the nail-set, as very dudish with mother of pear andles she insisted and I had to take them, though I d ot know what to do with that brushing instrument ord bless them all! She gave me one advice – never te ear this Afrikee dress in society Now I am a society an! Lord! what comes next? Long life brings queer periences!

New York : 9-4-94 – I have lectured in many of e big towns of America I have made a good many ends here, some of them very influential. Of course, e orthodox clergymen are against me and seeing that s not easy to grapple with me, they try to hinder, use and vilify me in every way...Lord bless them!

I believe that the Satya-yuga will come when there l be one caste, one Veda, and peace and harmony. is idea of Satya-yuga is what would revivify India.

I have an old mother. She has suffered much all life and in the midst of all she could bear to give me for the service of God and man.

The cat is out of the bag—without my seeking at all. And who is the editor of one of our (Indian) papers which praises me so much, and thanks God that I came to America to represent Hinduism ? Mazoomdar's cousin! Poor Mazoomdar-he has injured his cause by telling lies through jealousy Lord knows I *never attempted any* defence

I had a very good time in Boston at Mrs. Breed's and saw Prof Wright I am going to Boston again. The tailor is making my new gown, I am going to speak at Cambridge University (Harvard) *and would be the* guest of prof Wright there They write grand welcomes in the Boston papers inviting me

I spoke last night at the Waldorf hotel Mrs Smith sold tickets at $2 each, I had a full hall which by the way was a small one

I made a hundred dollars at Lynn which I do not send (to India) because I have to make my new gown and other nonsense

Do not expect to make any money at Boston Still I must touch the brain of America and stir it up if I can.

2nd May 94 - I could not find the exact orange color of my coat here, so I have been obliged to satisfy myself with the next best, a cardinal red with more of yellow. The coat will be ready in a few days.

Got about 70 the other day by lecturing at Waldorf and hope to get some more by tomorrow's lecture.

From 7th to 18th there are engagements in Boston but they pay very little.

our people wanted to send me for it I came over telling them-"that may or may not join that assembly-and you may send over if you like" They sent me over leaving me quite free I do not care for the attempts of the old Missionary, but the fever of jealousy which attacked Mazoomdar gave me a terrible shock, and I pray that he would know better-for he is a great and good man who has tried all his life to be good But this proves one of *my Master's sayings "live in a room covered with black* soot; however careful you may be, some spots must stick to your clothes"

So however one may try to be good and holy-so long he is in the world - some part of his nature must gravitate downwards

I was never a *missionary* nor ever would be one-my place is in the Himalayas. I have satisfied myself so far that I can with a full conscience say, God - I saw terrible misery among my brethren I searched and discovered the way out of it, tried my best to apply the remedy but failed - so Thy will be done"

24-5-94 . 'Some would call you a saint, some a ***chandala***, some a lunatic, others a demon, go on then straight to thy work without heeding any," thus sayeth one of our great Sannyasins, an old Emperor of India, King Bhartrihari who joined the Order in old times.

Chicago **: *28-5-94*** I was whirling to and fro from New York to Boston. I do not know when I am going back to India. It is in the hands of Him who is at my back directing me.

Have done a good deal of lecturing here... expenses here are terrible

18-6-94 I am going to New York in a week. M... Bagley seems to be unsettled by that article in the F... paper against me. She sent me over a copy from D... troit, and has ceased correspondence with me. Lord b... her, she has been very kind to me.

Although there is much public appreciation of ... work, it is thoroughly uncongenial and demoralising to m...

20-6-94 The backbiters, I must tell you, had ... indirectly benefited me; on the other hand, they h... injured me immensely in view of the fact that our Hin... people did not move a finger to tell the Americans th... I represented them. Did our people send some word... thanking the American people for their kindness to m... and stating that I was representing them? No, the... told the American people that I had donned the Sannya... sin's garb only in America and that I was a cheat, bar... and simple. So far as reception went, it had no effect on the American nation, but so far as helping me with funds went, it had a terrible effect in making them take off their helping hands from me. And it is one year since I have been here, and not one man of note from India had thought it fit to make the Americans know that I am no *cheat*. There again the missionaries are always seeking for something against me and they are busy picking up anything said against me by the Christian ... people here ... between the

Round him (the great Ramakrishna Paramahamsa) this band (of young educated Sannyasins) is slowly gathering They will do the work. This requires an organisation, money - a little at least to set the wheel in motion. Who would have given us money in India? So, I crossed over to America I begged all the money from the poor, and the offers of the rich I would not accept because they could not understand my ideas Now lecturing for a year in this country, I could not succeed at all (of course, I have no wants for myself) in my plan of raising some funds for setting up my work First this year is a bad year in America, thousands of their poor are without work. Secondly, the missionaries and the— try to thwart all my views Thirdly, a year has rolled by, and our countrymen could not even do so much for me as to say to the American people that I was a real Sannyasin and no cheat, and that I represented the Hindu religion Even this much, the expenditure of a few words, they could not do ! (yet) I love them, He who has been with me through hills and dales, through deserts or forest, will be with me, I hope

I am sincere to the backbone, and my greatest fault is that I love my country only to well

23-6-94: Mrs Potter Palmer is the chief lady of the United States. She was the lady President of the World's Fair. She is much interested in raising the women of the world and is at the head of a big organisation for women She is a particular friend of Lady Dufferin and has been entertained by the Royalties of

Chicago: 29-6-94 – I am continually trav
In Chicago there is a friend whose house is my
quarters

Now as to my prospects here – it is well nigh
Why, because although I had the best purpose it has
made null and void by these causes All that I get
India is from Madras letters. The letters say again
again how I am being praised in India But, I never
a single Indian paper writing about me except the
square inches sent to me by *Alasinga*. On the
hand, everything that is said by Christians in Ind
sedulously gathered by the missionaries and regu
published and they go from door to door to make
friends give me up They have succeeded only too
for there is not one word for me from India. In
Hindu papers may laud me to the skies, but not a
of that ever came to America, so that many peopl
this country think me a fraud. In the face of
missionaries and with the jealousy of the Hindus her
back them, I have not a word to say I now thinl
was foolish of me to go to the Parliament on the stren
of the Madras boys. They are boys after all. Of cou
I am eternally obliged to them, but they are after
enthusiastic young men without any executive abilit
I came here without credentials How else to sh
that I am not a fraud in the face of the missionaries a
the B – S – ?... There has not been one voice f
me in one year and every one against me. More th
two months ago *I wrote to Alasinga about this.* H
did not even answer my letter. I am afraid his hea
has grown lukewarm...On the other hand, my brethre

foolishly talk nonsense about Keshab Sen...Oh !, if only I had one man of some true abilities and brains to back me in India ! But His will be done I stand a fraud in this country It was my foolishness to go to the Parliament without any credentials, hoping that there would be many for me I have to work it out slowly.

Every moment I *expected something from India.* No, it never came Last two months especially I was in torture every moment No, not even a newspaper from India ! My friends waited, waited month after month, nothing came, not a voice. Many consequently grew cold and at last gave me up But, it is the punishment for relying upon man.

My thanks eternal to the Madras young men May the Lord bless them for ever .. I am praying always for their welfare and am I not in the least displeased with them, but I am not pleased with myself I committed a terrible error of calculating upon others' help-once in my life-and I have *paid for it. It was my fault* and not theirs Lord bless all the Madras people I have launched my boat in the waves, come what may Regarding my brutal criticisms, I have really no right to make them...I must bear my own Karma and that without a murmur

New York : July 94 - I came yesterday to this place, and shall remain here a few days I did not receive any "Interior" for which I am glad I want to keep aloof from rousing bad feelings towards these "sweet Christian gentlemen" in my heart........ I do not care the least for the gambols these men play, seeing as I do through the

insincerity, the hypocrisy and love of self and name that is the *only motive power* in these men.

I am bearing the heat very well here I had an invitation to Swamscott on the sea from a very rich lady whose acquaintance I made last winter in New York, but I declined with thanks I am very careful now to take the hospitality of *anybody here, especially* rich I had a few other invitations from some very rich people here. I refused, I have by this time seen the whole business through

New York 9-7-94 - Glory upto *Jagadamba* (the Divine Mother)! I have gained beyond expectations The prophet has been honoured and with a *vengeance. I am weeping like a child at His mercy - He never leaves* His servant, . the printed things are coming to the American people The names there are the very flower of our country The President was the chief *nobleman* of Calcutta and the other man Mahesh Chandra Nyayaratna is the Principal of the Sanskrit College and the chief Brahmin in all India and recognised by the Government as such *What a rogue am I that in the face of such* mercies sometimes faith totters. Seeing every moment that I am in His hands, still the mind sometimes gets despondent. There is a *God* - a Father - a <u>*Mother*</u> who never ... ies ... not

Blessed, blessed art Thou, Lord God of my soul!

U.S.A.: 11-7-94 - We will do great things yet! Last only sowed the seeds; this year. I mean to reap.

In the Detroit lecture I got $ 900, i e. Rs 2, 700 In other lectures, I earned in one $2,500, i e. Rs 7,500, in one hour, but got only 200 dollars! I was cheated by a roguish lecture bureau I have given them up.

Swampscott 26-7-94 – I had a beautiful letter from sister Mary Sister Jeany can jump and run and play and swear like a devil and talk slang at the rate of 500 a minute, only she does not much care for religion, only a little She is gone home today and I am going to Greenacre I had been to see Mrs Breed, Mrs Stone was there, with whom is residing Mrs Pullman and all the golden bugs, my old friends hereabouts They are kind as usual On my way back from Greenacre I am going to Annisquam to see Mrs Bagley for a few days Darn it, I forget everything I had duckings in the sea like a fish. I am enjoying every bit of it How nice and cool it is here, and it increases a hundredfold when I think about the gasping, sizzling, boiling, frying four old maids (the Hale Sisters), and how cool and nice I am here Whooooo!

Miss Philips has a beautiful place somewhere in N Y. State - mountain, lake, river, forest altogether - what more? I am going to make a Himalayas there and start a monastery as sure as I am living - I am not going to leave this country without throwing one more apple of discord into this already roaring, kicking, mad whirlpool of American religion

Greenacre Inn, Eliot, Maine· 26-7-94 – This is a big inn and farm house where the Christian Scientists are holding a *session*. Last spring in New York, I was invited

by the lady projector of the meeting to come here, and here I am. It is a beautiful and cool place, no doubt, and many of my old friends of Chicago are here. Mrs. Mills, Miss Stockam and several other ladies and gentlemen live in tents which they have pitched on the open ground by the river They have a lively time and sometimes all of them wear what you call the scientific dress the whole day. They have lectures almost everyday One Mr. Colville from Boston is here; he speaks every day, it is said, under spirit control. The Editor (?) of the *University Truth* has settled herself down here She is conducting religious services and holding classes to heal all manner of diseases, and very soon I expect them to be giving eyes to the blind, and the like! After all, it is a queer gathering. They do not care much about social laws and are quite free and happy Mrs Mills is quite brilliant and so are many other ladies A very cultured lady from Detroit is going to take me to an Island fifteen miles into the sea. I hope we shall have a nice time. . I may go over to Annisquam from here, I suppose. This is a beautiful and nice place and the bathing is splendid. Cora Stockham has made a bathing dress for me, and I am having as good a time in the water as a duck - this is delicious even for the denizens of Mudville...

Here is Mr. Wood of Boston, who is one of the great lights of the Christian Science sect. But, he objects to belong to the sect of Mrs Whirlpool. So he calls himself a mental healer of meta-physical-chemico-physico-religiosic what-not! Yesterday, there was a tremendous cyclone which gave a good "treatment" to the tents The big tent under which they had the lectures, had developed

so much spirituality under the "treatment" that it entirely disappeared from mortal gaze and about two hundred chairs were dancing about the grounds under spiritual ecstasy! Mrs Figs takes a class every morning, and Mrs. Mills is jumping all about the place - they are all in high spirits I am especially glad for Cora, for they suffered a good deal last winter and a little hilarity would do her good You will be astounded with the liberty they enjoy in the camps, but they are very good and pure people there - a little erratic, that is all

I shall be here till Saturday next The other night the camp people went to sleep beneath a pine tree under which I sit every morning *a la* Hindu and talk to them. Of course, I went with them, and we had a nice night under the stars, sleeping on the lap of mother earth, and I enjoyed every bit of it I cannot describe that night's glories - after a year of brutal life that I have led, to sleep on the ground, to meditate under the tree in the forest! The inn people are more or less well-to-do-, and the camp people are healthy, young, *sincere* and holy men and women I teach them "Shivoham" "Shivoham" and they all repeat it, innocent and pure as they are and brave beyond all bounds And so I am happy and glorified.

Thank God for making me poor, thank God for making these children in the tents poor. The Dudes and Dudines are in the Hotel, but iron-bound nerves and souls of triple steel and spirits of fire are in the camp. If you had seen them yesterday, when the rain was falling in torrents and the cyclone was overturning everything, hanging by their tent strings to keep them

from being blown down, and standing in the majesty of their souls - these brave ones - it would have done your hearts good - I will go a hundred miles to see the like of them. Lord bless them

"Sweet one! Many people offer to You many things I am poor-but I have the body, mind and soul I give them over to you Deign to accept, Lord of the Universe, and refuse them not " So have I given over my life and soul once for all One thing-they are a dry sort of people here They do not understand "Madhava", the Sweet One They are either intellectual or go after faith cure, table turning, witchcraft, etc etc Nowhere have I heard so much about "love, life and liberty" as in this country, but no where it is less understood Here God is either a terror or a healing power, vibration, and so forth Lord bless their souls! And these parrots talk day and night of love and love and love!

Greenacre · 11-8-94 - I have been all this time in Greenacre I enjoyed this place very much They have been all very kind to me One Chicago lady, Mrs Pratt of Kenilworth, wanted to give me $500 She became so much interested in me, but I refused She has made me promise that I would send word to her whenever I was in need of money, which I hope the Lord will never put me in. His help alone is sufficient to me

On Sunday I am going to lecture at Plymouth at the "Sympathy of Religions" meetings of Col Higginson .. Miss Ho
to Fishki
of days—

a grand and good place. The New York people have a tenacity of purpose unknown in any other city I had a letter from Mrs Potter Palmer asking me to see her in August She is a very gracious and kind lady. There is my friend Dr Janes of New York, President of the Ethical Cultural Society, who has begun his lectures I must go to hear him He and I agree so much

Annisquam 20-8-94 - I am with the Bagleys once more They are kind as usual Professor Wright was not here But he came day before yesterday and we have very nice time together Mr Bradley of Evanston was here His sister-in-law had me sit for a picture several days and had painted me I had some very fine boating and one evening overturned the boat and had a good drenching, clothes and all ..

From here I think I will go back to New York. Or I may go to Boston to Mrs Ole Bull, widow of the great violinist of this country She is a very spiritual lady She lives in Cambridge and has a fine big parlour made of woodwork brought all the way from India She wants me to come over to her any time and use her parlour for lectures

I have kept pretty good health all the time and hope to do in the future I had no occasion yet to draw on my reserve, yet I am rolling on pretty fair. And I have given up all money making schemes and will be quite satisfied with a bite and a shed and will work on.

31-8-94 : The letter from the Madras people was published in yesterday's "Boston Transcript"...I shall be

here till Tuesday next at least, on which day I am going to lecture here in Annisquam.

The greatest difficulty with me is to keep or even to touch money. It is disgusting and debasing...I have friends here who take care of all my monetary concerns

Boston : 13-9-94 – I have been in this holel (Hotel Bellevue, Becon St.) for about a week I will remain in Boston some time yet.. I am vagabondizing I was very much amused the other day to read Abe Hue's description of the vagabond lamas of Tibet–a true picture of our fraternity. He says they are queer people. They come when they will, sit at everybody's table, invitation or no invitaion, live where they will and go where they will. There is not a mountain they have not climbed, not a river they have not crossed, not a language they do not talk in. He thinks that God must have put into them a part of that energy which makes the planets go round and round eternally Today this vagabond lama was seized with a desire of going right along,scribbling and so I walked down and entering a store brought all sorts of writing materials and a beautiful portfolio which shuts with a clasp and has even a little wooden inkstand.. Last month, I had mail enough from India and am greatly delighted with my countrymen at their generous appreciation of my work. Good enough for them. Prof. Wright, his wife and children were as good as ever. Words cannot express my gratitude to them.

Everything so far is not going bad with me, except ... had a bad cold. Now I think the fellow is gone.

This time I tried Christian Science for insomnia and really found it worked very well.

Hotel Belle Vue, Boston. 19-9-94 – I am at present lecturing in several places in Boston What I want is to get a place where I can sit down and write down my thoughts I had enough of speaking, now, I want to write. I think I will have to go to New York for it Mrs Guernsey was so kind to me and she is ever willing to help me I think I will go to her and sit down and write my book

U.S.A., 21-9-94 – I have been continuously travelling from place to place and working incessently, giving lectures and holding classes

I have made some nice friends here amongst the liberal people, and a few amongst the orthodox. Too much work is making me nervous The giving of too many public lectures and constant hurry have brought on this nervousness...

New York 25-9-94 – Here in summer they go to the sea side–I also did the same. They have got almost a mania for boating and yatching. The yacht is a kind of light vessel which everyone, young and old who has the means, possesses. They set sail in them every day to the sea and return home to eat, drink and dance–while music continues day and night. Pianos render it a botheration to stay indoors!

I shall now tell something of the Hales. Hale and his wife are an old couple, having two daughters, two nieces and a son. The son lives abroad where he earns a living.

The daughters live at home. In this country relationship is through the girls The son marries and no longer belongs to the family, but the daughter's husband pays frequent visits to his father-in-laws's house. They say,

"Son is son till he gets a wife,
The daughter is daughter all her life."

All the four are young and not yet married. Marriage is a very troublesome business here In the first place, one must have a husband after one's heart Secondly, he must be a moneyed man...They will probably live unmarried, besides they are now full of 'renunciation' through my contact and are busy with thoughts of Brahman!

The two daughters are blondes, that is, have golden hair, while the two nieces are brunettes, that is of dark hair. They know all sorts of occupations. The nieces are not so rich, they conduct a kindergarten school, but the daughters do not earn Many girls of this country earn their living Nobody depends upon others. Even millionaires' sons earn their living, but they marry and have separate establishments of their own The daughters call me brother, and I address their mother as mother. All my things are at their places, and they look after them, wherever I may go. Here the boys go in search of a living while quite young, and the girls are educated in the universities. So, you will find that in a meeting there will be ninety-nine per cent girls The boys are nowhere in comparison with them

There are a good many spiritualists in this country. The medium is one who induces the spirit. He goes ... some ghosts, of all

sizes and all colours I have witnessed some cases, but they seemed to be a hoax. I shall test some more before I come to a final conclusion. Many of the spiritualists respect me

Next comes Christian Science They form the most influential party, nowadays, figuring everywhere They are spreading by leaps and bounds, and causing heart-burn to the orthodox. They are Vedantins, I mean, they have picked up a few doctrines of the Advaita and grafted them upon the Bible. And they cure diseases by proclaiming, "सोऽहं सोऽहं" "I am He" "I am He" - through strength of mind They all admire me highly.

Nowadays the orthodox section of this country are crying for help "Devil Worship" is but a thing of the past. They are mortally afraid of me and exclaim, "What a pest! Thousands of men and women follow him! He is going to root out orthodoxy!" Well, the torch has been applied and the conflagration that has set in through the grace of the Guru shall not be put out In course of time, the bigots will have their breath knocked out of them.

The Theosophists have not much power But, they too are dead against the orthodox section

This Christian Science is exactly like our Kartabhaja sect (an offshoot of Vaishnavism during its degeneracy in Bengal). Say, "I have no diseases,' and you are whole; and say, "I am He" - सोऽहं - and you are quits - be at large This is a thoroughly materialistic country The people of this Christain land will recognise religion if only you can cure diseases, work miracles, and open up

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All my things are at their places, and ...

What nonsense!...I heard that Rev. Kali Charan Baner in a lecture to Christian missionaries said that I was a political delegate. This is their trick! I have said a few harsh words in honest criticism of Christian Governments in general, but that does not mean that I care for, or have any connection with politics or that sort of thing...

Uniform silence is all my answer to my detractors...

This nonsense of public life and newspaper blazoning has disgusted me thoroughly I long to go back to the Himalayan quiet.

Chicago Sept. 94 - I have been travelling all over this country all this time and seeing everything I have come to this conclusion that there is only one country in the world which understands religion-it is India, with all their faults, the Hindus are shoulders above and ahead of all other nations in morality and spirituality. ... I have seen enough of this country I think, and so soon will go over to Europe and then to India

Baltimore Oct. 94 - I am here now. From here I go to Washington, thence to Philadelphia and then to New York.

Washigton · I am going to talk here today, tomorrow at Baltimore, then again Monday at Baltimore and Tuesday at Washington again So, I will be in Philadelphia in a few days after that. I shall be in Philadelphia only to see Prof. Wright, and then I go to New York and run for a little while between New York and Boston and then go to Chicago, *via* Detroit, and then "whist"... as Senator ~~[illegible]~~ says, to England.

Palmer

avenues to money, and understand little of any thing els
But there are honourable exceptions.

People here have found a new type of man in me.
Even the orthodox are at their wit's end And peo
are now looking up to me with an eye of reverence.
there a greater strength than that of Brahmacharya
purity, my boy?

...They are good-natured, kind, and truthful. A
is right with them, but that *enjoyment is their God.*
is a country where money flows like a river, with beau
as the ripple and learning its waves, and which rolls
luxury

They look with veneration upon women, who play
most prominent part in their lives.. *Well,* I am almost
my wit's end to see the women of this country! *The*
take me to the shops and everywhere, as if I were a chil
They do all sorts of work - I cannot do even a sixteent
part of what they do

Boston 26-9-94 I will have to go back to Melros
on Saturday and remain there till Monday.

I am busy writing letters to India last few days
will remain a few days more in Boston.

U.S.A - 27-9-94 - One thing I find in the book o
my speeches and sayings published in Calcutta Some o
them are printed in such a way as to savour of politica
views; whereas I am no
I care only for the spirit
wi be righted by
... attached

I have been very well treated here and am doing very well. There is nothing extraordinary, in the meantime, except that I got vexed at getting loads of newspapers from India, so after sending a cartload to Mother Church and another to Mrs Guernsey, I had to write to them to stop sending their newspapers. I have had "boom" enough in India. Alasinga writes that every village all over the coutry now has heard of of me. Well, the old peace is gone for ever and no rest anywhere from heretofore. These newspapers of India will be my death, I am sure. Lord bless them, it was all my foolery. I really came here to raise a little money secretly and go over but was caught in the trap and now no more of a reserved life.

23-10-94 I have become one of their own teachers. They all like me and my teachings.. I travel all over the country from one place to another, as was my habit in India, preaching and teaching. Thousands and thousands have listened to me and taken my ideas in a very kindly spirit. It is the most expensive country, but the Lord provides for me everywhere I go.

26-10-94 I am enjoying Baltimore and Washington very much. I will go hence to Philadelphia.

The lady with whom I am staying is Mrs Totten, a niece of Miss Howe. I will be her guest more than a week yet.

A lady from London with whom one of my friends is staying has sent an invitation to me to go over as her guest.

U.S A.. 1894 · Last winter I travelled a good deal

ery severe

I thought it would be dreadful, but I did not find it so after all

Chicago · 15-11-94 – I have seen many strange sights and grand things...America is a grand country. It is a paradise of the poor and women There is almost no poor in the country and no where else in the world women are so free, so educated, so cultured They are everything in society

This is a great lesson The Sannyasin has not lost a bit of his Sannyasinship, even his mode of living And in this most hospitable country, every home is open to me. The Lord who guides me in India, would He not guide me here? And He has

You may not understand why a Sannyasin should be in America, but it was necessary...I am neither a sight-seer nor an idle traveller, but you will see...and bless me all your life

New York 19-11-94 – Struggle, struggle was my motto for the last ten years Struggle, still I say When it was all dark, I used to say, struggle when light is breaking in, I still say, struggle

I have depended always on the Lord, always on Truth, broad as the light of day Let me not die with stains on my conscience for having played Jesuitism to get up name or fame, or even to do good.

Chicago · Nov 94 – Here......they were all trying to [illegible]e and get money thereby They did something, but [illegible] l better than they Why? I did not put myself [illegible] heir success. It was the will of the Lord. But

Next Sunday we shall have a lecture Dr. James was as usual very kind and good, and Mr Higgins is as practical as ever.. Mr Higgins has published a pamphlet about me

Through the Lord's will, the desire for name and fame has not yet crept into my heart, and I dare say never will I am an instrument and He is the operator Through this instrument He is rousing the religious instinct in thousands of hearts in this far-off country Thousands of men and women here love and revere me.. I am amazed at His grace Whatever town I visit, it is in an uproar They have named me "the cyclonic Hindu" It is His will – I am a voice without a form

Chicago 3-1-95–I lectured at Brooklyn last Sunday Mrs Higgins gave a little reception the evening I arrived and some of the prominent members of the Ethical Society including Dr (Lewis G) James were there Some of them thought that such oriental religious subject will not interest the Brooklyn public

But the lecture through the blessing of the Lord proved a tremendous success About 800 of the *elite* of Brooklyn were present and the very gentlemen who thought it would not prove a success are trying to organise a series in Brooklyn

I am trying to get a new gown. The old gown is here, but it is shrunken by constant washings so that it is unfit to wear in public

I saw Miss Couring at Brooklyn. She was as kind as ever.

all these have fabricated and circulated the most horrible lies about me in this country, and behind my back....

I do not care what they say. I love my God, my religion, my country, and above all, myself, a poor beggar. I love the poor, the ignorant, the down trodden. I feel for them. The Lord knows how much. He will show the way. I do not care a fig for human approbation or criticism.

I have that insight through the blessings of Ramakrishna. I am trying to work with my little band, all of them poor beggars like me ..

Cambridge 8-12-94 - I have been here three days. We had a nice lecture from Lady Henry Somerset. I have a class every morning here on Vedanta and other topics. I went to dine with the Spaldings another day. That day they urged me, against my repeated protests, to criticize the Americans. I am afraid they did not relish it. It is, of course, always impossible to do so...I am kept pretty busy the whole day. I shall remain here until the 27th or 28th of this month.

Cambridge . 21-12-94-I am going away next Tuesday to New York. The lectures are at an end.

U. S. A. : 26-12-94 - In reference to me every now and then, attacks are made in missionary papers (so I hear), but, I never care to see them.

Brooklyn : 28-12-94 -I arrived safely in New York and proceeded at once to Brooklyn, where I arrived in time. We had a nice evening. Several gentlemen belonging to the Ethical Culture Society came to see me.

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✓6-1-95 – I have been in the midst of the genuine article in England The English people received me with open arms and I have very much toned down my ideas about the English race. First of all, I found that those fellows, as Lund etc , who came over from England to attack me were nowhere. Their existence is simply ignored by the English people None but a person belonging to the English Church is thought to be genteel. Again some of the best men of England belong to the English Church and some of the highest in position and fame became my truest friends This was another sort of experience from what I met in America

The English people laughed and laughed when I told them about my experience with the Presbyterians and other fanatics here (in America) and my reception in hotels etc. I also found the difference in culture and breeding between tha two countries, and came to understand why American girls go in shoals to be married to Europeans

Everyone was kind to me there (in England), and I have left many noble friends of both sexes anxiously awaiting my return in the spring

As to my work there, the Vedantic thought has already permeated the higher classes of England, Many people of education and rank, amongst them not a few clergymen, told me that the conquest of Rome by Greece was being re-enacted in England...I had eight classes a

I find strong-minded men and women take up the work and carry it forward with the peculiar English grip and energy This year my work in New York is going on splendidly Mr. Leggett is a very rich man of New York and very much interested in me The New Yorker has more steadiness than any other people in this country (America), so that I have determined to make my centre here In this country my teachings are thought to be queer by the "Methodist ' and "Presbyterian" aristocracy. In England, it is the highest philosoyhy to the English Church aristocracy

Moreover those talks and gossips, so characteristic of the American women, are almost unknown in England. The English woman is slow, but when she works up to an idea she will have a hold on it sure, and they are regularly carrying on my work there and sending every week a report--think of that ! Here (in America) if I go away for a week, everything falls to pieces

Chicago **11-1-95** – I have been running all the time between Boston and New York, two great centres of this country of which Boston may be called the brain, and New York, the purse In both, my success is more than ordinary.. I am indifferent to newspaper reports... A little boom was necessary to begin work.

I want to teach truth, I do not care whether here or elsewhere...

I shall work incessantly until I die, and even after death, I shall work for the good of the world.

Thousands of the best men do care for me; I am

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I have got again a little cold. I am going to the Guernseys I have got a room downtown also where I will go several hours to hold my classes

✓ *New York* : 1-2-95 – I have a message, and I will give it after my own fashion, I will neither Hinduise my message nor Christianise it, nor make it any 'ise' in the world. I will only my-ise it and that is all.

I have a message to give, I have no time to be sweet to the world, and every attempt at sweetness makes me a hypocrite I will die a thousand deaths rather than lead a jelly-fish existence and yield to every requirement of this foolish world - no matter whether it be my own country or a foreign country

I am living with Landsberg at 54 W. 33rd Street. He is a brave and noble soul, Lord bless him Sometimes I go to Guernseys' to sleep

9-2-95 – In this dire winter I have travelled across mountains and over snows at dead of night and collected a little fund, and I shall have peace of mind when a plot is secured for Mother (Sri Sarada Devi)

10-2-95 – Three lectures I delivered in New York. These Sunday public lectures are now taken down in shorthand and printed. Three of them made two little pamphlets.. I shall be in New York two weeks more, and then I go to Detroit to come back to Boston for a week or two.

My health is very much broken down this year by constant work. I am very nervous I have not slept a

slowly exercising an influence in this land, greater th[illegible]
all the newspaper blazoning of me can do...

It is the force of character, of purity and of tru[illegible]
and personality. So long as I have these things, no one
will be able to injure a hair of my head. If they try they
will fail, sayeth the Lord...The Lord is giving me a deep
and deeper insight every day. The Lord is alw[illegible]
with me...

✓ *12-1-95*-I do not care for name or fame, or a[illegible]
humbug of that type. I want to preach my ideas for t[illegible]
good of the world. My life is too precious to be spe[illegible]
in getting the admiration of the world. I have no tim
for such foolery.

✓ *Brooklyn · 20-1-95*-I am to lecture here(Brooklyn
tonight, and two other lectures in the next month.
came in only yesterday. Miss Josephine Lock and Mr[illegible]
Adams were very kind to me in Chicago and my debt t[illegible]
Mrs. Adams is simply inexpressible.

✓*New York : 24-1-95*-This year, I am afraid I am
getting overworked, as I feel the strain..

Tomorrow will be the last Sunday lecture of this
month. The first Sunday of next month there will be a
lecture in Brooklyn, the rest three in New York, with
which I will close this year's New York lectures.

New York : 24-1-95-My last lecture was not very
much appreciated by *men* but awfully by *women*. This
Brooklyn is the centre of anti-women's rights movements
and when I told them that women deserve and are fit
for everything, they did not like it of course. Never
mind, the women were in ecstasies.

I was told once by a Christian missionary that their Scriptures have a historical character, and therefore are true To which I replied, "Mine have no historical character and *therefore* they are true, yours being historical they were evidently made by some man the other day Yours are man-made and mine are not, their non-historicity is in their favour"

I have myself been told by some of the Western scientific minds of the day how wonderfully rational the conclusions of the Vedanta are I know one of them personally, who scarcely has time to eat his meals, or go out of his laboratory, but who yet would stand by the hour to attend my lectures on the Vedanta; for, as he expresses it, they are so scientific, they so exactly harmonise with the aspirations of the age and with the conclusions to which modern science is coming at the present time

It struck me more than once that I should have to leave my bones on foreign shores owing to the prevalence of religious intolerance

By improper representation of the Hindu Gods and Goddesses, the Christian missionaries were trying with all their heart and soul to prove that really religious men could never be produced from among their worshippers; but like a straw before a tidal wave that attempt was swept away, while that class of our countrymen - interested organized bodies of mischief-makers - which set itself to devise means for quenching the great fire of the rapidly spreading power of Sri Ramakrishna, seeing all its efforts futile, has yielded to despair. What is human will in opposition to the Divine?

single night soundly this winter. I am sure, I am
king too much, yet a big work awaits me in England

I will have to go through it and then I hope to r
India and have rest all the rest of my life. I have t
at least to do my best for the world, leaving the re
to the Lord.

Now I am longing for rest. Hope I will get s
and the Indian people will give me up. How I w
like to become dumb for some years and not talk at a

I was not made for these struggles and fights of t
world I am naturally dreamy and restful. I am a bo
idealist, can only live in a world of dreams, the ve
touch of fact disturbs my vision and makes me unhapp
Thy will be done!

The whole life is a succession of dreams. My amb
tion is to be a conscious dreamer, that is all

✓ *14-2-95* – Perhaps, these mad desires were necessar
to bring me over to this country And I thank the Lor
for the experience.

I am very happy now Between Mr. Landsberg
and me, we cook some rice and lentils or barley and
quietly eat it, and write something or read or receive
visits from poor people who want to learn something,
and thus I feel I am more a Sannyasin now than I ever
was in America.

I went to see Miss Corbin the other day, and Miss
Farmer and Miss Thursby were also there. We had a
nice half-hour and she wants me to hold some classes in
her home from next Sunday

I was told once by a Christian missionary that their Scriptures have a historical character, and therefore are true To which I replied, "Mine have no historical character and *therefore* they are true, yours being historical they were evidently made by some man the other day Yours are man-made and mine are not; their non-historicity is in their favour "

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Now I am longing for rest. Hope I will get some and the Indian people will give me up How I would like to become dumb for some years and not talk at all!

I was not made for these struggles and fights of the world I am naturally dreamy and restful. I am a born idealist, can only live in a world of dreams, the very touch of fact disturbs my vision and makes me unhappy Thy will be done!

The whole life is a succession of dreams My ambition is to be a conscious dreamer, that is all

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I am very happy now Between Mr Landsberg and me, we cook some rice and lentils or barley and quietly eat it, and write something or read or receive visits from poor people who want to learn something, and thus I feel I am more a Sannyasin now than I ever was in America

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I was told once by a Christian missionary that their Scriptures have a historical character, and therefore are true To which I replied, "Mine have no historical character and *therefore* they are true, yours being historical they were evidently made by some man the other day Yours are man-made and mine are not, their non-historicity is in their favour"

I have myself been told by some of the Western scientific minds of the day how wonderfully rational the conclusions of the Vedanta are I know one of them personally, who scarcely has time to eat his meals, or go out of his laboratory, but who yet would stand by the hour to attend my lectures on the Vedanta; for, as he expresses it, they are so scientific, they so exactly harmonise with the aspirations of the age and with the conclusions to which modern science is coming at the present time

It struck me more than once that I should have to leave my bones on foreign shores owing to the prevalence of religious intolerance

By improper representation of the Hindu Gods and Goddesses, the Christian missionaries were trying with all their heart and soul to prove that really religious men could never be produced from among their worshippers; but like a straw before a tidal wave that attempt was swept away, while that class of our countrymen - interested organized bodies of mischief-makers - which set itself to devise means for quenching the great fire of the rapidly spreading power of Sri Ramakrishna, seeing all its efforts futile, has yielded to despair What is human will in opposition to the Divine?

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many new ideas and new veins of thought which I had scarcely heard or thought of in my life. On awaking I remembered them and reproduced them in my lecture I cannot enumerate how often this phehomenon took place Many, many days did I hear such lectures while lying in bed Sometimes the lecture would be delivered in such a loud voice that the inmates of the adjacent rooms would hear the sound and ask me the next day, "With whom, Swamiji, were you talking so loudly last night?" I used to avoid the question somehow Ah, it was a wonderful phenomenon

When pepole began to honour me, then the Padris were after me They spread many slanders about me by publishing them in the newspapers. Many asked me to contradict these slanders But I never took the slightest notice of [illegible]
accomp[illegible]
paying [illegible]
steadily for my mission The upshot, I used to find, was that often my slanderers feeling repentant afterwards, would surrender to me and offer apologies, themselves contradicting the slanders in the papers. Sometimes, it so happened that learning that I had been invited to a certain house, somebody would communicate those slanders to my host, who hearing them, would leave home, locking the door. When I went there, to attend the invitation, I found it was deserted and nobody was there. Again a few days afterwards, they themselves learning the truth, would feel sorry for their previous conduct, and come to offer themselves as disciples The fact is... this whole world is full of mean ways of worldliness, But

persons, and that will cover the expenses. Miss Hamlin has been very kind to me and does all she can to help me

N Y . March 27, 95 – Mrs Bull has been greatly benefitted by Mrs Adam's lessons I also took a few but no use, the ever-increasing load in front does not allow me to bend forward as Mrs Admas wants!

My classes are full of women Sometimes, I get disgusted with eternal lecturings and talkings, want to be silent for days and days

When I was a boy, I thought that fanaticism was a great element in work, but now, as I grow older, I find that it is not

My experience comes to this, that it is rather wise to *avoid all sorts of fanatical reforms.*

To make a man take in everything and believe it, would be to make him a lunatic I once had a book sent to me, which said I must believe everything told in it It said there was no soul, but that there were Gods and Goddesses in heaven, and a thread of light going from each of our heads to heaven! How did the writer know all these things? She had been inspired, and wanted to believe it, too, and because I refused, she said, "You must be a very bad man, there is no hope for you!" This is fanaticism.

N. Y · 10-4-95 – Tomorrow I have a class at Mis Andrews' of 40, W 9th Street.

11-4-95 – I am going away to the country tomorrow to Mr. L - for a few days. A *little fresh air* will do me good, I hope.

Everyone of my friends thought it would end in nothing, this my living and preaching in poor quarters by all myself, and that no *ladies would ever come here.* Miss Hamlin especially thought that "she" or "her right sort of people" were *way up* from such things as to go and listen to a man who lives by himself in a poor lodging. But, the "right kind" came for all that, day and night, and she too. Lord! how hard it is for man to believe in Thee and Thy mercies! Shiva! Shiva!

24-4-95 – I am perfectly aware that although some truth underlies the mass of mystical thought which has burst upon the western world of late, it is for the most part full of motives unworthy or insane.

For this reason, I have never had anything to do with these phases of religion, either in India or elsewhere, and mystics as a class are not very favourable to me...

Only the Advaita philosophy can save mankind, whether in East or West, from "devil worship" and kindred superstitions, giving tone and strength to the very nature of man. India herself requires this, quite as much or even more than the West. Yet, it is hard uphill work, for we have first to create a taste, then teach, and lastly proceed to build up the whole fabric.

Perfect sincerity, holiness, gigantic intellect, and an all-conquering will—let only a handful of men work with these, and the whole world will be revolutionised. I did a good deal of platform work in this country last year, and received plenty of applause but found that I was only working for myself. It is the patient upbuilding of character, an *intense struggle to realise truth,* which alone

will tell on the future of humanity. So this year, am hoping to work along this line—training up to practical Advaita realisation a small band of men and women I do not know how far I shall succeed . . I can teach, and preach, and sometimes write But, I have intense faith in Truth The Lord will send help and hands to work with me Only let me be perfectly pure, perfectly sincere, and perfectly unselfish.

New York 25-4-95 - The day before yesterday, I received a kind note from Miss F—including a cheque for a hundred dollars for the Barbar House lectures She is coming to N Y next Saturday

I have arranged to go to the Thousand Islands There is a cottage belonging to Miss Dutcher, one of my students, and a few of us will be there on rest and peace and seclusion I want to manufacture a few "Yogis" out of the materials of the classes

New York. 5-5-95 - I always thougth that although Prof Max Muller in all his writings on the Hindu religion adds in the last a derogatory remark, he must see the whole truth in the long run His last book "Vedantism"- there you will find him swallowing the whole of it: *re-incarnation* and all it is only a part of what I have been telling. .Many points smack of my paper in Chicago. I am glad now the old man has seen the truth, because that is the only way to have religion in the face of modern research and science.

I know very little; that little I teach without reserve; where I am ignorant, I confess it and never am I so glad as when I find people being helped by Theosophists,

Christians, Mohammedans or any body in the world I am a Sannyasin and as such I consider myself as a servant, not as a master in the world If people love me, they are welcome, if they hate, then too are they welcome

U.S.A.: 6-5-95 – I did not come to seek name and fame, it was forced upon me . I am the one man who dared defend his country, and I have given them such ideas as they never expected from a Hindu There are many who are against me, but I will never be a coward.

I have a firm footing in N Y, and so my work will go on I am taking several of my disciples to a summer retreat to finish their training in Yoga and Bhakti and Jnana

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N.Y. May: 95–My pupils have come round me with help and the classes will go on nicely now no doubt. I

was so glad of it because teaching has become a part of my life, as necessary to my life as eating or breathing

Those that are very emotional, no doubt, have their Kundalini rushing quickly upwards, but it is as quick to come down as to go up And when it does come down, it leaves the devotee in a state of utter ruin It is for this reason that Kirtans and other auxiliaries to emotional development have a great drawback It is true that by dancing jumping, etc through a momentary impulse, that power is made to course upwards, but it is never enduring On the contrary, when it traces back its course, it rouses virulent lust in the individual Listening to my lectures in America, through temporary excitement many among the audience used to get into an ecstatic state, and some would even become motionless like statues, but on enquiry, I afterwards found that many of them had an excess of the carnal instinct immediately after that state But this happens simply owing to a lack of steady practice in meditation and concentration

New York 28-5-95 - I have succeeded in doing something in this country at last

June, 95: I am going today to live with the Guernseys as the doctor wants to watch me and cure me...

I will be in N Y a few days more Helmer wants me to take three treatments a week for four weeks, then two a week for four more and I will be all right. In case I go to Boston, he recommends me to a very good *ostad* (expert) there whom he would advise on the matter.

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This year, I could hardly keep my head up and I did not go about lecturing I intend to write a book this summer on the Vedanta philosophy

T I Park, N Y 26-6-95–In the articles by Prof Max Muller on the "Immortality of the Soul,' the old man has taken in *Vedanta, bones and all, and has* boldly come out.

I am asked again and again in the letters from India to go over They are getting desperate Now if I go to Europe, I will go as the guest of Mr. Francis Leggett of N Y. He will travel all over Germany, England, France and Switzerland for six weeks From there I shall go to India, or I may return to America I have a seed planted here and wish it to grow This winter's work in N. Y. *was splendid and it may die if I suddenly go to India*; so I am not sure about going to India soon.

Nothing noticeable has happened during this visit to the Thousand Islands The scenery is very beautiful and I have some of my friends here with me to talk about God and soul *ad libitum* . I am eating fruits and drinking milk and so forth, and studying huge Sanskrit books on Vedanta which they have kindly sent me from India...

My reply to Madras (address) has produced a tremendous effect there. A late speech by the President of the Madras Christian College, Mr. Miller, embodies

have ever seen. Imagine a lake surrounded with hills covered with a huge forest, with nobody but ourselves. So lovely, so quiet, so restful! How glad I am to be here after the bustle of cities!

It gives me a new lease of life to be here I go into the forest alone and read my Gita, and am quite happy I will leave this place in about ten days and go to the Thousand Islands Park I will meditate by the hour there, and be all alone to myself. The very idea is ennobling.

N. Y.. June, 95 – I have just arrived home. The trip did me good, and, I enjoyed the country and the hills, and especially Mr Leggett's country-house in N Y State

May the Lord bless Landsberg wherever he goes! He is one of the sincere souls I have had the privilege in this life to come across

Just now I received a letter from an English gentleman in London who had lived in India in the Himalayas with two of my brethren He aske me to come to London

Percy N. H . 17-6-95 (on birch bark) - Going tomorrow to the Thousand Island care Miss Dutcher's, T. I Park, N Y. I have a chance of going to Europe in August.

New York· 22-6-95 I am going on pretty nearly in the same old fashion, talking when I can and silent when forced to be. I do not know whether I will go to Greenacre this summer. I saw Miss Farmer the other day ..She is a noble, noble lady

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a large amount of my ideas, and declares that the West is in need of Hindu ideas of God and man, and calls upon the young men to go and preach to the West. This has created quite a furore, of course amongst the Missions

9-7-95 - I am a man of dogged perseverence. The more the Christian priests oppose me, the more I am determined to leave a permanent mark on their country.

I have already some friends in London I am going there by the end of August.

Aug. 95 – My ideas are going to work in the West better than in India

I am free, my bonds are cut, what care I where this body goes or does not go? . I have a truth to teach, I the child of God And, He, who gave me the truth will send me fellow-workers

T. I. Park, N Y. I am enjoying this place immensely; very little eating, good deal of thinking and talking, and study. A wonderful calmness is coming over my soul. Every day I feel I have no duty to do. I am always in eternal rest and peace It is He that works. We are only instruments Blessed be His name! The threefold bondage of lust and gold and fame is as it were fallen from me for the time being, and once more even here, I feel what sometimes I felt in India : "From me all difference has fallen, all right or wrong, all delusion and ignorance has vanished, I am walking in the path

y?

From that height, the universe looks like a mudpuddle ! Hari Om Tat Sat. He exists; nothing else does. I in Thee and Thou in me. Be Thou, Lord, my eternal refuge! Peace, Peace, Peace!

N. Y. 2-8-95 – I am going to Paris first with a friend and start for Europe on the 17th of Aug I will, however, remain in Paris only a week. and then I go over to London.

Some Theosophists came to my classess in N. Y., but as soon as human beings perceive the glory of the Vedanta, all abracadabras fall off themselves This has been my uniform experience Whenever mankind attains a higher vision, the lower vision disappears of itself. Multitude counts for nothing A few heart-whole, sincere and energetic men can do more in a year than a mob in a century, if there is heat in one body, then those others that come near it must catch it This is the law

So success is ours, so long as we keep up the heat, the spirit of truth, sincerity and love. My own life has been a very chequered one, but I have always found the eternal words verified, "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through Truth, alone, lies the way of God."

New York 9-8-95 – The names of those who will wish to injure us will be legion But is that not the surest sign of our having the truth? The more I have been opposed, the more my energy has always found expression, I have been driven and worshipped by princes I have been slandered by priests and laymen alike. But, what of it? Bless them all! They are my very Self and have they not helped me by acting as a

spring board from which my energy could take higher and higher flights?

I have discovered one great secret — I have nothing to fear from *talkers* of religion.

N.Y. Aug. 95 – The work here is going on splendidly. I have been working incessantly at two classes a day since my arrival Tomorrow I go out of town with Mr Leggett for a week's holiday Madame Antoinettee Sterling, one of the great (English) singers is very much interested in the work I have made over all the secular part of the work to a committee and am free from all that botheration. I have no aptitude for organising. It nearly breaks me to pieces

I have now taken up the Yoga Sutras, and take them up one by one and go through all the commentators along with them These talks are all taken down, and when completed will form the fullest annotated translation of Patanjali in English.

T.I Park, Aug. 95 – I am going by the end of Aug. with Mr. Leggett to Paris, and then I go to London.

The older I grow the more I see behind the idea of Hindus, that *man* is the greatest of all beings.

Paris: 5-9-95 – I have a cordial invitation from Miss Muller... I was very ill for a few days.

all right in his home It is beautiful His wife is surely an angel, and his life is full of India. He has been years there — mixing with the Sannyasins, eating their food, etc etc, so, I am very happy I found already several retired Generals from India, they were very civil and polite to me

That wonderful knowledge of the Americans that identify every black man with the negro is entirely absent here, and nobody even stares at me in the streets...

I am very much more at home here than anywhere out of India

My friend being a Sanskrit scholar, we are busy working on the great commentaries of Shankara, etc. I am going to try to get up classes in October in London.

It is taught in the West that society began 1800 years ago, with the New Testament Before that there was no society That may be true with regard to the West, but it is not true as regards the whole world.

Often, while I was lecturing in London, a very intellectual and intelligent friend of mine would argue with me, and one day after using all his weapons against me, he suddenly exclaimed, 'But why did not your Rishis come to England to teach us?" I replied, "Because there was no England to come to Would they preach to the forests?"

Saversham (England): 4-10-95 – I am now in England. Mr. Sturdy has taken initiation from me, and is a very enterprising and good man.

Reading (England) Oct. 95 – Mr. Sturdy is known to Tarakda (Shivananda). We are both trying to create a stir in England. I shall this year leave again in November for America.

4-10-95 – He (Sri Ramakrishna) is protecting us, forsooth - I see it before my eyes Is it through my own strength that beauty like that of fairies, and hundreds of thousands of rupees, lose their attraction and appear as nothing to me? Or is it he who is protecting me?

6-10-95 – This month I am going to give two lecture in London and one in Maidenhead

23-10-95 – I delivered a lecture ("Self-knowledge") last night at 8-30 P M in the Princes Hall (Piccadilly) London.

Whatever in my teaching may appeal to the highest intelligence and be accepted by thinking men, the adoption of that will be my reward

All religions have for their object the teaching either of devotion, knowledge or Yoga, in a concrete form Now, the philosophy of Vedanta is the abstract science which embraces all these methods, and this is that I teach leaving each one to apply it to his own concrete form. I refer each individual to his own experiences, and where reference is made to books the latter are procurable, and may be studied by each one for himself Above all, I teach no authority proceeding from hidden beings, speaking through visible agents, any more than I claim learning from hidden books or manuscripts. I am the exponent of no [illegible] nor do I believe that good can come

I teach only the self, hidden in the heart of every individual and common to all

I propound a philosophy which can serve as a basis to every possible religious system in the world, and my attitude towards all of them is one of extreme sympathy· my teaching is antagonistic to none I direct my attention to the individual, to make him strong, to teach him that he himself is divine, and I call upon men to make themselves conscious of this divinity within.

Caversham (Eng). 1895 - I have to work day and night, and am always whirling from place to place besides By the end of next week I shall go to America

Eng 95 - One must prevail over these people by dint of learning, or one will be blown off at a puff They understand neither Sadhus nor your Sannyasins nor the spirit of renunciation What they do understand is the vastness of learning, the display of eloquence and tremendous activity.

London 24-10-95 - I have already delivered my first address It has been well received by the '*Standard*,' one of the most influential conservative papers

Chelsea (Eng) 31-10-95 - Two American ladies mother and daughter, Mrs and Miss Netter, living in London came to the class last night They were very sympathetic, of course The class there at Mr Chamier is finished.

I shall begin at my lodgings from Saturday night next. I expect to have a pretty good-sized room or two for my classes I have been also invited to Moncu

Conway's Society, where I speak on the 10th. I shall have a lecture in the Balboa Society next Tuesday. The Lord will help

London* · *18-11-95 - In England my work is really splendid. I am astonished myself at it...Bands and bands come and I have no room for so many; so they squat on the floor, ladies and all

I am really tired from incessant work. Any other Hindu would have died if he had to work as hard as I have to.

21-11-95 – I sail by the 'Britannia' on Wednesday, the 27th. My work so far has been very satisfactory here

R.M S. "Britannia" (on the way back to America) So far the journey has been very beautiful. The Purser has been very kind to me and gave me a cabin to myself. The only difficulty is the food. Today, they have promised to give me some vegetables. We are standing at anchor now The fog is too thick to allow the ship to proceed. It is a queer fog almost impenetrable, though the sun is shinging bright and cheerful.

A great number of people sympathised with me in America - much more than in England Vituperation by the low cast missionaries made my cause succeed better. I had no money, the people of India having given me my bare passage-money, which was spent in a very short time. I had to live on the charity of individuals.

In England, there was not one missionary or anybody who said anything against me; not one who tried to make

✓ BACK TO U.S A.

3-12-95 - (U S.A.) - I find I have a mission in this country also (U S A)

I have a messege to the West as Buddha had a message to the East

My ideal indeed can be put into a few words, that is, to preach unto mankind their divinity and how to make it manifest in every moment of life

This world is in chains of superstition, I pity the oppressed, whether man or woman, and I pity the oppressors more

The world is burning with misery Can we sleep? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the God within answers to the call What more is in life? What greater work? The details come to me as I go. I never make plans. Plans grow and work themselves and I only say, awake, awake!

Yes, Buddha taught that the many were real and the One unreal, while orthodox Hinduism regards the One as the Real, and the many as unreal, and what Ramakrishna Paramhamsa and I have added to this is that the Many and the One are the same Reality, perceived by same mind at different times and in different attitudes.

Ingersoll once said to me· "I believe in making the most out of this world, in squeezing the orange dry, because this world is all we are sure of" I replied, "I know a better way to sqeeze the orange of this world than you do, and I get more out of it. I *know* I cannot die, so I am not in a hurry; I know there is no fear, so I

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That knowledge (of answering other's question before their vocal expression) does not happen to me so often, but with Sri Ramakrishna it was almost always there.

✓ *New York: 8-12-95* – After ten days of a most tedious and rough voyage, I safely arrived in New York For the first time in my life, I was badly sea-sick My friends had already engaged some rooms, where I am living now, and intend to hold classes ere long. In the meanwile, the T-s have been alarmed very much and are trying their best to hurt me, but they and their followers are of no consequence whatever.

I went to see Mrs Leggett and other friends and they are as kind and enthusiastic as ever.

After the clean and beautiful cities of Europe, New York appears dirty and miserable. I am going to begin work next Monday ..Saw Mrs and Mr. Solomon and other friends By chance met Mrs. Peak at Mrs. Guernsey's but yet have no news of Mrs. Rothinburger. Going to Ridley this Christmas.

N. Y. - 16-12-95 – The classes I had here were six in the week, besides a question class The general attendance varies between 70 to 120. Besides, every Sunday I have a public lecture The last month my lectures were in a small hall holding about 600. But 900 will come as a rule, 300 standing, and about 330 going off, not finding room This week, thereore, I have a bigger hall, with a capacity of holding 1200 people

There is no admission charge in these lectures, but a collection covers the rent The newspapers have taken me up this week and altogether I have stirred up New York considerably this year. If I could have remained here this summer and organised a summer place, the work would have been going on sure foundations here But as I intend to go over in May to England, I shall have to leave it unfinished

I am afraid my health is breaking down under constant work. I want some rest The *Brahmavadin* is going on here very satisfactorily. I have begun to write articles on Bhakti...Some friends here are publishing my Sunday lectures

Next month I go to Detroit, then to Boston, and Harvard University, then I shall have rest, and then I go to England

New York : 23-12-95 – I have a strong hatred for child-marriage, I have suffered terribly from it and it is the great sin for which our nation has to suffer. As such I would hate myself if I help such a diabolical custom directly or indirectly...This world is broad enough for me. There will always be a corner found for me some-

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As my friends have engaged a Stenographer (Goodwin) all these class lessons and public lectures are taken down

I have a chance of getting a piece of land in the country, and some buildings on it, plenty of trees and a river, to serve as a summer meditation resort That, of course, requires a committee to look after it in my absence, also the handling of money and printing and other matters,

I have separated myself entirely from money questions, yet without it the movement cannot go on So necessarily I have to make over every thing executive to a commitee, which will look after these things in my absence

U S A 17-2-96 – I have succeeded now in rousing the very heart of the American civilisation, New York, but it has been a terrific struggle

People are now flocking to me Hundreds have now become convinced that there are men who can really control their bodily desires

N. Y.: 29-2-96 – One book, the ***Karma-Yoga***, has been already published, the ***Raja-Yoga***, a much

where. If the people of India do not like me, there will be others who do. I must set my foot to the best of my ability upon this devilish custom of child-marriage. I am sorry, very sorry. I cannot have any thing to do with such things as getting husbands for babies. Lord help me, I never had and never will have...I can kill the man who gets a husband for a baby...I want bold, daring, adventurous spirits to help me. Else I will work alone. I have a mission to fulfil. I will work it out alone. I do not care who comes or who goes ..I am pleased with myself for having tried my best to discharge the duties laid on me by my Guru; and well done or ill, I am glad that I have tried. I want no help from any human being in any country.

1896 – I got thoroughly used to the interviewer in America... There I was representative of the Hindu religion at the world's Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893. The Raja of Mysore and some other friends sent me there I think I may lay claim to having had some success in America. I had many invitations to other great American cities besides Chicago My visit was a very long one, for with the exception of a visit to England last summer, I remained about three years in America The American civilsation is in my opinion a very great one I find the American mind peculiarly susceptible to new ideas, nothing is rejected because it is examined on its own merits and stands or falls by these alone.

It might convey a more definite idea to call it (my teaching) the kernel of all forms of religion, stripping

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May 96, London In London once more The climate now in England is nice and cool We have fire in the grate

I am having classes here just now I begin Sunday lectures from next week The classes are very big and are in the house We have rented it for the season

London 30-5-96 Day before yesterday, I had a fine meeting with Prof Max Muller He is a saintly man and looks like a young man in spite of seventy years, and his face is without a wrinkle His *reverence* for Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is extreme

And he has written an article on him in the *Nineteenth Century* He asked me, "What are you doing to make him known to the world?" Ramakrishna has charmed him for years

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May, 96 - We have a whole house to ourselves this time It is small but convenient, and in London they do not cost so much as in America Some old friends are here, and Miss M came over from the Continent She is good as gold, and as kind as ever We have a nice little family in the house, with another monk from India I have had two classes already—they will go on for four or five months and after that to India I go

This city of London is a sea of human heads—ten or fifteen Calcuttas put together.

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***N. Y.* 17-3-96** – I had a beautiful letter from Miss Muller, also one from Miss MacLeod, the Leggett Family has become very attached to me

***Boston* · 23-3-96** – One of my new Sannyasins is indeed a woman. The others are men.

My success is due to my popular style - the greatness of a teacher consists in the simplicity of his language. My ideal of language is my Master's language, most colloquial and yet most expressive

I am glad that a good deal of literature has been created by taking down stenographic notes of my lectures. Four books are ready.

***Chicago* 6-4-96** – I have been suffering from slight fever for the last two days

***N. Y.* : 14-4-96** - I am sailing for England tomorrow. I sail on the White Star Line Germanic (tomorrow) at 12 noon.

SECOND VISIT TO ENGLAND Apr '96

***Reading* (Eng): 20-4-96** – The voyage has been pleasant and no sickness this time. I gave myself treatment to avoid it. I made quite a little run through Ireland and some of the old England towns and now am

once more in Reading admidst Brahma, Maya, and Jiva, the individual and the universal soul, etc.

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This city of London is a sea of human heads—ten or fifteen Calcuttas put together.

5-6-96 - The Raja-Yoga book is going on splendidly. Saradananda goes for the States soon.

The better [illegible] of the English Church told me that I was putting Vedantism into the Bible.

Mrs. Besant is a very good woman. I lectured at her Lodge in London. I do not know personally much about her. That she is one of the most sincere of women, her greatest enemy will concede. She is considered to be the best speaker in England. She is a Sannyasini.

At first, I found myself in a critical position owing to the hostile attitude assumed against the people of this country (India) by those who went there (America) from India. At first many fell foul of me, manufactured huge lies against me by saying that I was a fraud, that I had a harem of wives and half a regiment of children. But my experiences of these missionaries opened my eyes as to what they were capable of doing in the name of religion. Missionaries were nowhere in England. None came to fight me. Mr. Lund went over to America to abuse me behind my back but people would not listen to him. I was very popular with them. When I came back to England, I thought this missionary would be at me, but Truth silenced him. They (the English Church people) greatly sympathised with me. I was agreeably surprised to find that the English clergymen, though they differed from me, did not abuse me behind my back and stab in the dark.

When I first lectured in England, I had a little class of twenty or thirty, which was kept going when I left, and when I came back from America, I could get an audience of one thousand. In America, I could get a mu[illegible] one, as I spent three years in America.

June, 6, 96 – What an extraordinary man is Prof. Max Muller! I paid a visit to him a few days ago. The Professor was first induced to inquire about the power, which led to sudden and momentous changes in the life of the late Keshab Chandra Sen, the great Brahmo leader; and since then, he has been an earnest student and admirer of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna

"Ramakrishna is worshipped by thousands today, Professor" I said "To whom else shall worship be accorded if not to such?" was the answer The Professor was kindness itself, and asked Mr Sturdy, and myself to lunch with him He showed us several colleges in Oxford, and the Bodlein library He also accompanied us to the railway station and all this he did because as he said, "It is not everyday one meets a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa"

The visit was really a revelation to me That nice little house in its setting of a beautiful garden, the silver-headed sage, with a face calm and benign, and forehead smooth as a child's in spite of seventy winters, and every line in that face speaking of a deep-seated mine of spirituality somewhere behind, that noble wife, the helpmate of his life through his long and arduous task of exciting interest, overriding opposition and contempt, and at last creating a respect for the thoughts of the sages of ancient India-the trees, the flowers, the calmness, and the clear sky-all these sent me back in imagination to the glorious days of ancient India, the days of out Brahmarshis and Rajarshis, the days of the great Vanaprasthis, the days of Arundhatis and Vasishthas

It was neither the philologist nor the scholar that I

the rhythm of the Upanishads -"आत्मानं वै विजानथ: अन्यां वाचं विमुंचथ।" "Know the Atman alone, and leave off all other talk."

And what love he bears towards India! I wish I had a hundredth part of that love for my own motherland!

Max Muller is a Vedantist of Vedantists

"When are you coming to India? Every heart there would welcome one who has done so much to place the thoughts of their ancestors in the true light," I said.

The face of the aged sage brightened up—there was almost a tear in his eye, a gentle nodding of the head, and slowly the words came out—"I would not return then, you would have to cremate me there" Further questions seemed an unwarrantable intrusion into realms wherein are stored the holy secrets of man's heart.

There are certain great souls in the West who sincerely desire the good of India, but I am not aware whether Europe can point out another well-wisher of India, who feels more for India's well-being than Prof Max Muller.

My impression is that it is Sayana who is born again as Max Muller to revive his own commentary on the Vedas! I have had this notion for long. It became confirmed in my mind, it seems, after I had seen Max Muller What a deep and unfathomable respect for Sri

Ramakrishna! He believes in his Divine Incarnation! What hospitality towards me when I was his guest Seeing the old man and his lady, it seemed to me that they were living their home-life like another Vasishtha and Arundhati! At the time of parting with me, tears came into the eyes of the old man

One who is the commentator of the Vedas, the shining embodiment of knowledge—what are Varnashrama and caste to him? To him they are wholly meaningless, and he can assume human birth wherever he likes for doing good to mankind Specially, if he did not choose to be born in a land which excelled both in learning and wealth, where would he secure the large expenses for publishing such stupendous volumes? The East India Company paid nine lakhs of rupees in cash to have the Rig-Veda published! Even this money was not enough Hundreds of Vedic Pandits had to be employed in this country (India) on monthly stipends. Has anybody seen in this age, here in this country, such profound yearning for knowledge, such prodigious investment of money for the sake of light and learning?

Max Muller himself has written it in his preface that in twentyfive years, he prepared only the manuscripts Then the printing took another twenty years! It is not possible for an ordinary man to drudge for fortyfive years of his life with one publication. Just think of it! Is it an idle fancy of mine to say he is Sayana himself?

[illegible] out the idea
[illegible] n with Maya,
[illegible] two passages

It was neither the philologist nor the scholar that I saw, but a soul that is every day realising its oneness with Brahman, a heart that is every moment expanding to reach oneness with the universal Where others lose themselves in the desert of dry details, he has struck the well-spring of life. Indeed his heart-beats have caught the rhythm of the Upanishads -"आत्मानं वै विजानथ: अन्या वाचं विमुंचथ।" ["Know the Atman alone, and leave off all other talk."]

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in Sankara's commentaries and send them to my friend, Professor Max Muller.

That Advaitism is the highest discovery in the domain of religion, the Professor has many times publicly admitted.

Perhaps his previous birth was in India; and lest by coming to India, the old frame should break down under the violent rush of a suddenly aroused mass of past recollections—is the fear in his mind that now stands foremost in the way of his visit to this country (India). It is not a fact that the Professor is an utter disbeliever in such subtle subjects as the mysterious psychic powers of the Yogis

Prof. Max Muller presented Sri Ramakrishna's life to the learned European public in an article entitled "A Real Mahatman" which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* in its August number, 1896

Subsequently, he has published the book—*Ramakrishna, His Life and Sayings*

The greater portion of the book has been devoted to the collection of the sayings, rather than to the life itself. That those sayings have attracted the attention of many of the English-speaking readers throughout the world, can be easily inferred from the rapid sale of the book. The sayings falling direct from his holy lips are impregnate with the strongest spiritual force and power and therefore they will surely exert their divine influence in every part of the world.

London . 24-6-96 – Next month I go to Switzerland to pass a month or two there, then I shall return to London

London 6-7-96 – The Sunday lectures were quite successful. So were the classes The season has ended, and I too am thoroughly exhausted

London 7-7-96 - The work here progressed wonderfully. I had one monk here from India I have sent him to the U S A and sent for another from India. The season is closed, the classes, therefore, and the Sunday lectures are to be closed on the 16th next And on the 19th, I go for a month or so for quiet and rest in the Swiss Mountains to return next autumn to London and begin again The work here has been very satisfactory. By rousing interest here, I really do more for India than in India Later on, towards the end of the winter, I expect to go to India with some English friends who are going to live in my monastery there, which, by the way, is in the air yet It is struggling to materialize somewhere in the Himalayas

London . 8-7-96 - In three minutes' time, the other evening, my class raised £ 150/- for the new quarters for next autumn's work.

England 14-7-96 - I am going to Switzerland next Sunday.

SWITZERLAND

Switzerland 25-7-96 - I want to forget the world entirely at least for the next two months. The moun-

tains and snow have a beautifully quieting influence on me, and I am getting better sleep here than for a long ti

I am reading a little, starving a good deal, and practising a good deal more. The strolls in the woods are simply delicious. We are now situated under three huge glaciers, and the scenery is very beautiful

Whatever scruples I may have had as to the Swiss lake origin of the Aryans, have been taken clean off my mind

5-8-96 - A letter came this morning from Prof Max Muller telling me that the article on Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa has been published in the *Nineteenth Century*, August number

He asked my opinion about it He promises a great deal of help

included And what is there to be desired in this little muddle-puddle of a world, with its ever-recurring misery, disease and death?

This rest, eternal, peaceful rest, I am catching a glimpse of now in this beautiful spot "Having once known that the Atman alone and nothing else exists, desiring what or for whose welfare, shall you suffer misery about the body?"

Miss Muller thinks that she will go away very soon to England In that case, I will not be able to go to Berne, for that Purity Congress I have promised Only if the Seviers consent to take me along I will go to Kiel. The Seviers are good and kind, but I have no right to take advantage of their generosity, nor of Miss Muller as the expenses there are frightful. As such, I think it best to give up the Berne Congress, as it will come in the middle of September, a long way off I am thinking, therefore, of going towards Germany ending in Kiel, and thence back to England.

Miss Muller telegraphed to Prof. Deussen last night; the reply came this morning, 9th Aug, welcoming me, I am to be in Kiel at Deussen's on the 10th September I am going with the Seviers to Kiel.

I have not fixed yet anything about the lecture. I have no time to read

Switz : 12-8-96 - I haven't yet written anything nor read anything I am indeed taking a good rest I had a letter from the Math stating that the other Swami is ready to start. He will, I am sure, be just the man. He is one of the best Sanskrit scholars we have......I have

a number of newspaper cuttings from America about Saradananda—I hear from them that he has done very well there.

Aug. 1896 - I went to the glacier of Monte Rosa yesterday and gathered a few hardy flowers growing almost in the midst of eternal snow.

23-8-96 - I am at present travelling in Switzerland and shall soon go to Germany, to see *Professor Deussen*. I shall return to England from there about the 23rd or 24th September and the next winter will find me back in my country.

Saradananda and Goodwin are doing good work in the U.S I have sent for another man from India who will join me next month I have begun the work, let others work it out

I have seen Professors of Sanskrit in America and in Europe Some of them are very sympathetic towards Vedantic thought. I admire their intellectual acumen and their lives of unselfish labour But, Paul Deussen who is the professor of Philosophy in the University of Kiel, and the veteran Max Muller heve impressed me, as the truest friends of India and Indian thought It will always be among the most pleasing episodes in my life— my first visit to this ardent Vedantist at Kiel, his gentle wife who travelled with him in India, and his little daughter, the darling of his heart—and our travelling together through Germany and Holland to London, and the pleasant meetings we had in London

The Hindus visiting foreign countries take with them Ganges water and the Gita ... *First time when I*

went to the West, I also took a little of it with me, thinking it might be needed, and whenever opportunity occurred I used to drink a few drops of it. And every time I drank, in the midst of the stream of humanity, amid that bustle of civilisation, that hurry of frenzied footsteps of millions of men and women in the West, the mind at once became calm and still, as it were That stream of men, that intense activity of the West, that clash and competition at every step, those seats of luxury and celestial opulence—Paris, London, New York, Berlin, Rome—all would disappear and I used to hear that wonderful sound of "Hara, Hara."

26-8-96—I have been doing a great deal of mountain-climbing and glacier-crossing in the Alps Now I am going to Germany, I have an invitation from Prof. Deussen to visit him at Kiel

Kiel *10-9-96*—I have at last seen Prof Deussen... the whole of yesterday was spent very nicely with the Professor, sightseeing and discussing Vedanta—He is what I should call "a warring Advaitist"

BACK TO ENGLAND

London *17-9-96*—Today I reached London, after my two months of climbing and walking and glacier seeing in Switzerland One good it has done me-a few pounds of unnecessary adipose tissue have returned to the gaseous state!

I had a pleasant visit from Prof. Deussen in Germany, the greatest living German Philosopher. He and I travelled together to England, and today came

together to see my friend here with whom I am to sto for the rest of my stay in England. I shall work for few weeks, and then go back to India in the winter.

My natural tendency is to go into a cave, and be quiet, but a fate behind pushes me forward and I go Who ever could resist fate ?

I now live mostly on fruits and nuts, they seem to agree with me well. I have lost a good deal of my fat but on days I lecture, I have to go on solid food.

I met Madam S- in the street today. She does not come any more to my lectures. Good for her. Too much of philosophy is not good!

The lady who used to come to every meeting too late to hear a word, but buttonholed me immediately after and kept me talking, till a battle of Waterloo would be raging in my internal economy through hunger She came. They are all coming and more. That is cheering

We have a hall now; a pretty big one holding about two hundred or more. There is a big corner which will be fitted up as a library. I have another man from India now to help me

Wimbledon. 8-10-96 – The London classes were resumed, and today is the opening lecture.

London: 28-10-96 – The new Swami(Abhedananda) delivered his maiden speech yesterday at a friendly society's meeting It was good and I liked it; he has the making of a good speaker in him, I am sure.

Goodwin is going to become a Sannyasin It is to him that we owe all my books He is a strict vegetarian. He took shorthand notes of my lectures, which enabled the books to be published

London ***13-11-96*** – I am very soon starting for India, most probably on the 16th of Dec The first edition of Raja-Yoga is sold out, and there is standing order for several hundreds more

28-11-96 – The work in London has been a roaring success Capt and Mrs Sevier and Mr Goodwin are going to India with me to work and spend their own money on it!

I am going to start a centre in Calcutta and another in the Himalayas The Himalayan one will be an entire hill about 7000 ft high, cool in summer, cold in winter. Capt and Mrs Sevier will live there

People there in the West think that the more a man is religious, the more demure he must be in his outward bearing,—no word about anything else from his lips! As the priests in the West would on the one hand be struck with wonder at my liberal religious discourses, they would be as much puzzled on the other hand when they found me after such discourses, talking frivolities with my friends. Sometimes, they would speak out to my face · "Swami, you are a priest, you should not be joking and laughing in this way like ordinary man Such levity does not look well in you" To which I would reply: "We are children of Bliss, why should we look morose and sombre?" But, I doubt if they could rightly catch the drift of my words.

I had to work till I am at death's door and had to spend nearly the whole of that energy in America, so that the Americans might learn to be broader and more spiritual. In England, I worked only six months There was not a breath of scandal save one, and that was the working of an American woman, which greatly relieved my English friends,—not only no attacks, but many of the best English Church clergymen became my firm friends, and without asking I got much help for my work

Feb. 97 – From first to last, it (my first experience of America) was very good

I have a good many disciples in the West,—may be more than two or three thousands And they are all initiated with Mantras I gave them permission to utter Pranava (Om) My disciples are all Brahmanas!

I call them Brahmanas who are sattwika by nature.

I have visited a good deal of Europe, including Germany and France, but England and America were the chief centres of my work

All the social upheavalists (in America and England), at least leaders of them, are trying to find that all their communistic or equalising theories must have a spiritual basis, and that spiritual basis is in the Vedanta only. I have been told by several leaders who used to attend my lectures, that they required the Vedanta as the basis of the new order of things.

Many times, I was near being mobbed in America and England, only on account of my dress. But, I never heard of such a thing in India as a man being mobbed because of peculiar dress.

I have experienced even in my insignificant life that good motives, sincerity and infinite love can conquer the world.

I cannot but believe that there is somewhere a great Power that thinks of Herself as feminine, and is called Kali, and Mother and I believe in Brahman, too

The older I grow, the more everything seems to me to lie in manliness. This is my new gospel

I have been asked many times "Why do you laugh so much and make so many jokes?" I become serious sometimes, when I have stomach-ache! The Lord is all blissfulness He is the reality behind all that exists He is the Goodness, the Truth in everything You are His incarnations That is what is glorious The nearer you are to Him, the less you will have occasion to cry or weep The farther we are from Him, the more will long faces appear The more we know of Him, the more misery vanishes If one who lives in the Lord becomes miserable, what is the use of living in Him? What is the use of such a God?

Weep and pray to God ' O God, reveal thyself to me, Keep my mind away from lust and gold " And dive deep Can a man find pearls by floating or swimming on the surface

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Then only will India awake, when hundreds of large hearted men and women, giving up all desires of enjoying the luxurious life will long and exert themselves to their utmost for the well-being of the millions of their countrymen

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

CHAPTER VII

RETURN TO INDIA AND FOUNDING THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Westminster 11-11-96 – I shall most probably start for India on the 16th of December, or may be a day or two later. I go from here to Italy, and after seeing a few places there, join the steamer (North German Lloyd S.S. Prinz Regent Luitpold) at Naples.

The first edition of Raja-Yoga is sold out and a second is in the press.

London 20-11-96 – My present plan of work is to start two centres, one in Calcutta and the other in Madras, in which to train up young preachers. My interests are international and not Indian alone.

21-11-96 – I reach Madras about the 7th of Jan. I have three English friends with me. Two of them, Mr. and Mrs. Sevier, are going to settle in Almora. They are my disciples, and they are going to build the Math for me in the Himalayas.

3-12-96 – I am to start for India on the 16th with Captain and Mrs. Sevier and Mr Goodwin. The Seviers and myself take steamer at Naples. And as there will be four days at Rome, I will look in to say good-bye to Alberta.

Things are in a "Hum" here just now; the big hall for the class at 39, Victoria, is full and yet more are coming.

Well, the good old country now calls me, I must go so good-bye to all projects of visiting Russia this April

I just set things going a little in India, and am off again for the ever beautiful U S and England etc .. . The coming of Goodwin was very opportune as it captured the lectures here which are being published in a periodical form Already there have been subscribers enough to cover the expenses

Three lectures, next week, and my London work is finished for this season Of course, everybody here thinks it foolish to give up just when the "boom" is on, but the Dear Lord says, "Start for old India," and I obey,. ..

Florence · *20-12-96* – I am on my way (to India)

Damper *3-1-97* – We are nearing Port Said after four days of frightfully bad sailing from Naples

The ship is rolling as hard as she can

From Suez begins Asia Once more Asia What am I? Asiatic, European or American? I feel a curious medley of personalities in me

I land in a few days at Colombo and mean to "do" Ceylon a bit...

I enjoyed Rome more than anything in the West, and after seeing Pompeii, I have lost all regard for the so-called "modern civilisation". . I was mistaken when I told that sculpturing of the human figure was not developed in India as among the Greeks

I had a curious dream on my return voyage from England While our ship was passing through the Mediterranean Sea, in my sleep, a very old and venerable looking person, Rishi-like in appearance, stood before me and said, "Do ye come and effect our restoration. I am

one of that ancient order of Theraputtas which ... origin in the teachings of the Indian Rishis. The ... and ideals preached by us have been given out by ... tians as taught by Jesus, but for the matter of that ... was no such personality by the name of Jesus ever ... Various evidences testifying to this fact will be br... to light by excavating here". "By excavating which ... can those proofs and relics you speak of be foun... asked The hoary-headed one, pointing to a local... the vicinity of Turkey, said, "See here" Immed... after I woke up, and at once rushed to the upper ... and asked the captain, 'What neighbourhood is th... in just now?" "Look yonder," the captain replied, ' ... is Turkey and the Island of Crete"

I was asked by an English friend on the eve ... departure, "Swami, how do you like your mothe... after four years' experience of the luxrious, glo... powerful West?" I could only answer, "India I l... before I came away, now the very dust of India ... become holy to me, the very air is now holy, it is ... the holy land, the place of pilgrimage, the Tirtha"

Pamban 1897 – *It is impossible for me to ex... my gratitude to H H the Rajah of Ramnad for his ... towards me. If any good work has been done by ... and through me, India owes much to this good man, ... it was he who conceived the idea of my going to Ch... go, and it was he who put that idea into my head ... persistently urged me on to accomplish it.*

Ramnad: 30-1-97 – *Things are turning out m... curiously for me. From Colombo in Ceylon, whe...*

landed to Ramnad, the nearly southernmost point of the Indian Continent where I am just now as the guest of the Rajah of Ramnad, my journey has been a huge procession, crowds of people, illuminations, addresses etc etc A monument forty feet high is being built on the spot where I landed The Rajah of Ramnad has presented his address to "His Most Holiness" in a huge casket of solid gold beautifully worked Madras and Calcutta are on the tiptoe of expectation as if the whole nation is rising to honour me. .. I am on the very height of destiny Yet, the mind turns to quietness and peace.

I wrote a letter to my people from London to receive Dr Barrows kindly They accorded him a big reception, but it was not my fault that he could not make any impression there Calcutta people are a hard-headed lot! Now Barrows thinks a world of me, I hear! Such is the world.

When I returned to India after a visit to the West, several orthodox Hindus raised a howl against my association with the Western people and my breaking the rules of orthodoxy They did not like me to teach the truths of the Vedas to the people of the West.

Madras: 1897 – There have been certain circumstances growing around me, tending to thwart me, oppose my progress and crush me out of existence, if they could Thank God, they have failed, as such attempts will always fail But there has been for the last three years a certain amount of misunderstanding, and so long as I was in foreign lands, I held my peace and did not even speak one word, but now, standing upon the soil of my motherland, I want to give a few words of explanation

one of that ancient order of Theraputtas which h[illegible]
origin in the teachings of the Indian Rishis. The [illegible]
and ideals preached by us have been given out by [illegible]
tians as taught by Jesus; but for the matter of that, [illegible]
was no such personality by the name of Jesus ever [illegible]
Various evidences testifying to this fact will be br[illegible]
to light by excavating here" "By excavating which [illegible]
can those proofs and relics you speak of be found [illegible]
asked. The hoary-headed one, pointing to a locali[illegible]
the vicinity of Turkey, said, "See here" Immedi[illegible]
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after four years' experience of the luxrious, glori[illegible]
powerful West?" I could only answer, "India I lov[illegible]
before I came away, now the very dust of India h[illegible]
become holy to me, the very air is now holy, it is no[illegible]
the holy land, the place of pilgrimage, the *Tirtha*"

that is why I went to America. Who cared about the Parliament of Religions? Here was my own flesh and blood sinking every day, and who cared for them? This was my first step.

Alam Bazar Math. 25-2-97 – I have not a moment to die, as they say, what with processions and tom-tomings and various other methods of reception all over the country. I am almost dead As soon as the birthday celebration (of Sri Ramakrishna) is over I will fly off to the hills I do not know whether I would live even six months more or not unless I have some rest

I wished rather that a great enthusiasm should be stirred up. Don't you see, without some such things how would the people be drawn towards Sri Ramakrishna and be fired in his name? Was this ovation done for me personally, or was not his name glorified by this? See, how much thirst has been created in the minds of men to know about him! Now they will come to know of him gradually, and will not that be conducive to the good of the country? If the people do not know him, who came for the welfare of the country, how can good befall them? When they know what he really was, then *men*, real men, will be made...So I say that I rather desired that there should be some bustle and stir in Calcutta, so that the public might be inclined to believe in the mission of Sri Ramakrishna Otherwise what was the use of making so much fuss for my sake? Have I become any greater now?...I am the same now as I was before.

Darjeeling: 20-4-97–My illness is now much less– it may even be cured completely, if the Lord wills.

28-4-97 – The whole country here rose like to receive me Hundreds of thousands of person ing and cheering at every place. Rajahs dra carriage, arches all over the streets of the capi blazing mottos etc., etc! But, unfortunately already exhausted by hard work in England tremendous exertion in the heat of southern Ind trated me completely I had of course, to give idea of visiting other parts of India and fly up (nearest) hill station, Darjeeling Now I fee better

I have just another chance of coming over to Raja Ajit Sinha and several other Rajas star Saturday for England. Of course, they wanted t get me to go over with them But, unfortunate doctors would not hear of my undertaking any p or mental labour just now So with the greatest I had to give it up, reserving it for a near future

My hair is turning grey in bundles and my f getting wrinkles all over, that losing of flesh has

ne twenty years of age more And now I am losing flesh rapidly, because I am made to live upon meat and meat alone, no bread, no rice, no potatoes, not even a lump of sugar in my coffee!

✓*Baghbazar, Cal, (May - 97)* - The conviction has grown in my mind, after all my travels in various lands, that no great cause can succeed without an organisation.

Let this association be named after him in whose name, indeed, we have embraced the monastic life, and within twenty years of whose passing away a wonderful diffusion of his holy name and extraordinary life has taken place both in the East and the West

This is on Sri Ramakrishna's lines He had an infinite breadth of feeling I will break down the limits and scatter broadcast over the earth his boundless inspiration. We have been blessed with obtaining refuge at the feet of the Master, and we are born to carry his message to the world

✓*Calcutta . May 5, 97* - I have been to Darjeeling for a month to recuperate my shattered health I am very much better now The disease disappeared altogether in Darjeeling I am going tomorrow to Almora, another hill station, to perfect this improvement

Things are looking not very hopeful here, though the whole nation has risen as one man to honour me and people went almost mad over me! The price of the land has gone very much high near Calcutta My idea at present is to start three centres at three Capitals These would be my normal schools, from thence I want to invade India.

a bit of hope of seeing it partially accomplished, there comes a tremendous thwarting blow I do not care for the disease but what depresses me is that my ideals have not had yet the least opportunity of being worked out And you know the difficulty is money.

The Hindus are making processions and all that, but they cannot give money The only help I got in the world was in England, from Miss S. and Mr S . I thought then that a thousand pounds were sufficient to start at least the principal centre in Calcutta, ten or twelve years ago Since then the prices have gone up three or four times

The work has been started anyhow A rickety old little house has been rented for six or seven shillings, where about twenty-four young men are being trained I had to go to Darjeeling for a month to recover my health, and I am very much better—without taking any medicine, only by the exercise of mental healing. I am going again to another hill-station tomorrow, as it is very hot in the plains .. The London work is not doing well at all, I hear And that was the main reason why I would not go to England, just now, although some of our Rajas going for the Jubilee tried their best to get me with them, as I would have to work hard again to revive the interest in Vedanta. And that would mean a good deal more trouble physically.

I may go over for a month or so very soon, however.

Only if I could see my work started here, how gladly and freely would I travel about!

Mr. and Mrs Hammond wrote two very kind and nice letters, and Mr Hammond, a beautiful poem in the *Brahmavadin* although I did not deserve it a bit.

✓ *Almora · 20-5-97* – Even now money is floating on the waters, as it were. . but it will surely come. When it comes, buildings, land and a permanent fund—every thing will come all right But one can never rest assured until the chickens are hatched, and I am not now going down to the hot plains within two or three months. After that I shall make a tour and shall certainly secure some money

On account of the great heat in Almora, I am now in an excellent garden twenty miles from there This place is comparatively cooler but still warm. The heat does not seem to be particularly less than that of Calcutta...

The feverishness is all gone I am trying to go to a still cooler place Heat or the fatigue of walking, I find, at once produces trouble of the liver. The air here is so dry that there is a burning sensation in the nose all the time, and the tongue becomes, as it were, a chip of wood

I am very well here, for life in the plains has become a torture I cannot put the tip of my nose out in the streets, for there is a curious crowd! Fame is not all milk and honey!! I am going to train a big beard, now it is grey. It gives a venerable appearance.

To meet the expenses of my reception, the people of Calcutta made me deliver a lecture, and sold tickets!

Almora : 29-5-97 – I began to take a lot of exercise on horse-back, both morning and evening ... I really began to feel that it was a pleasure to have a body.

Almora 2-6-97 – I have been very, very bad indeed, I am now recovering a bit,—I hope to recover very soon...

I am afraid the work in London is going to pieces

I am living in a beautiful garden belonging to a merchant of Almora, a garden abutting several miles of mountains and forests Night before last a leopard came here and took away a goat from the flock kept in this garden. It was a frightful din the servants made and the barking of the big Tibet watchdogs These dogs are kept chained at a distance all night since I am here, so that they may not disturb my sleep with their deep barks The leopard thus found his opportunity and got a decent meal, perhaps, after weeks May it do much good to him!

Miss Muller has come here for a few days and was rather frightened when she heard of the leopard incident.

Before me, reflecting the afternoon's glow, stand long, long lines of huge snow peaks They are about 20 miles as the crow flies from here, and forty through the circuitous mountain roads

Almora . 2-6-97 – Sleep, eat and exercise – exercise, eat and sleep—that is what I am going to do some months

10-6-97 – I am at present in excellent health.

✓ *20-6-97* – I have not had any news of the work (in London) for so long. I do not expect any help from India, in spite of all the jubilation over me. They are so poor!

But I have started work in the fashion in which I myself was trained—that is to say, under the trees, and keeping the body and soul together, anyhow. The plan has also changed a little. I have sent some of my boys to work in the famine district It has acted like a miracle. I think, as I always thought—it is through the heart and that alone, that the world can be reached.

A number of boys are already in training, but the recent earthquake has destroyed the poor shelter we had to work in, which was only rented, anyway Never mind The work must be done without shelter, and under difficulties. As yet it is shaven heads, rags and casual meals This must change, however, and will, for are we not working for it, head and heart? One of my boys in training has been an executive engineer, in charge of a district. That means a very big position here (in India). He gave it up like a straw!

20-6-97 – I am all right now. Yesterday, I came to Almora and shall not go any more to the garden Henceforth, I am Miss Muller's guest

30-6-97 – I am leaving this place next Monday. Here I gave a lecture to an European audience in English, [illegible] This was [illegible] it for all [illegible] ecture for

Monday next, trip to Bareilly, then to Saharanpur next to Ambala thence most probably to Mussoorie with Capt Sevier, and as soon as it is a little cool, return to the plains, and journey to Rajputana, etc

4-7-97 – Although I am still in the Himalayas and shall be here for at least a month more, I started the work in Calcutta before I came, and they write progress every week

Just now I am very busy with the famine, and except for training a number of young men for future work have not been able to put more energy into the teaching work The "feeding work" is absorbing all my energy and means Although we can work only on a very small scale as yet, the effect is marvellous For the first time since the days of Buddha, Brahmin boys are found nursing by the bed-side of cholera-stricken pariahs.

In India, lectures and teaching cannot do any good What we want is Dynamic Religion And that "God willing," as the Mohammedans say, I am determined to show.

Almora* : *9-7-97 – I had arranged to go with A to England, but the doctors not allowing, it fell through

I have also a lot of cuttings from different American papers, fearfully criticising my utterances about American women, and furnishing me with the strange news that I had ' ...tcast as if I had any caste to lose, being a

... has been lost, but it has consider...
... tion to sea-voyage—my going...
...g Raja of the caste to which

belonged before my entering the Order got up a banquet in my honour, at which were present most of the big bugs of that caste... These feet have been washed and wiped and worshipped by the descendants of Kings, and there has been a progress through the country which none ever commanded in India.

It will suffice to say that the police were necessary to keep order if I ventured out into the street! That is outcasting indeed!

I never planned anything I have taken things as they came; only one idea was burning in my brain, to start the machine for elevating the Indian masses—and that I have succeeded in doing to a certain extent. My boys are working in the midst of famine and disease and misery—nursing by the mat-bed of the cholera-stricken pariah and feeding the starving *Chandala* He is with me, the Beloved, He was when I was in America, in England, when I was roaming about unknown from place to place in India What do I care about what they talk—the babies, they do not know any better

What! I who have realised the spirit and the vanity of all earthly nonsense, to be swerved from my path by babies' prattle! Do I look like that?

I had to talk a lot about myself...I feel my task is done—at most three or four years more of life are left. I have lost all wish for my salvation I never wanted earthly enjoyments, I must see my machine in strong

put in
which
caring

what will be next, and may I be born again and again,

_in, the

· wicked,

races, of

all species, is the special object of my worship.

My time is short I have to unbreast whatever I have to say, without caring if it smarts some or irritates others, do not be frightened at whatever drops from my lips, for the Power behind me is not Vivekananda but He, the Lord, and He knows best

If I have to please the world, that will be injuring the world Every new thought must create opposition— in the civilised a polite sneer, in the vulgar savage howls and filthy scandals

✓ *Almora · 10-7-97* – I am very busy, from here directing the work of my boys in some of the famine districts .

I had a mind to go to Tibet this year, but they would not allow me, as the road is dreadfully fatiguing However, I content myself with galloping hard over precipieces on mountain ponies.

Goodwin has gone to work in Madras on a paper, *Prabuddha Bharata*, to be started there soon

✓ *Almora: 13-7-97* – Today, my health is a little bad owing to this riding on horseback at break-neck speed in the sun I took Sashi's medicine for two weeks, I find no special benefit. The pain in the liver is gone, and owing to plenty of exercise my hands and legs have become muscular, but the abdomen is distending very much.

I feel suffocated while getting up or sitting down. Perhaps, this is due to the taking of milk. Previously suffered from two attacks of sunstroke. From that time my eyes become red if I expose myself to the sun, and the health continues to be bad for two or three days at a stretch

✓ *Almora 25-7-97* – I am having a good deal of riding and exercise but I had to drink a lot of skimmed milk per prescription of the doctors, with the result that I am more to the front than back! I am always a forward man though, but do not want to be too prominent just now, and I have given up drinking milk...Miss Margaret Noble of Wimbledon is working hard for me.

I am glad to find that I am aging fast, my hair is turning grey "Silver threads among the gold"—I mean black —are coming in fast

It is bad for a preacher to be young, I think, as I did all my life People have more confidence in an old man, and it looks more venerable...The world has its code of judgement which, alas, is very different from truth's

Madam Halboister has been helped by Vedanta and Yoga. I am unfourtunately sometimes like the circus clown who makes others laugh, himself miserable!

Our difficulty in life is that we are guided by the present and not by the future What gives us a little pleasure now drags us on to follow it, with the result that we always buy a mass of pain in the future for a little pleasure in the present.

are like deadly clogs to one's progress and is it not a wonder that people will still go on to find new ones by marriage!!!

He who is alone is happy Do good to all, like everyone, but *do not love* anyone It is a bondage, and bondage brings only misery Live alone in your mind-that is happiness To have nobody to care for and never minding who cares for you is the way to be free

I am more a woman than a man I am always dragging others' pain into me—for nothing without being able to do any good to anybody just as women, if they have no children, bestow all their love upon a cat!!!

Do you think this has any spirituality in it? Nonsense, it is all material, nervous bondage—that is what it is O, to get rid of the thraldom of the flesh!!

Sturdy's thermometer is now below zero, it seems. He seems to be greatly disappointed with my non-arrival in England this summer, what could I do?

We have started two Maths, one in Calcutta, the other in Madras The Calcutta Math (a wretched rented house) was awfully shaken in the late earthquake.

Almora 25-7-97 – In a few days I am going down to the plains and from thence go to the western parts of the mountains When it is cooler in the plains, I will make a lecture tour all over and see what work can be done.

29-7-97 - I am leaving this place the day after tomorrow — whether for Mussoorie hills or somewhere else I shall decide later

Yesterday, I delivered a lecture in the circle of the local English people, and all were highly pleased with it. But, I was very much pleased with the lecture in Hindi that I delivered the previous day. I did not know before that I could be oratorical in Hindi.

Ambala. 19-8-97 – I am now going to the hills at Dharamsala. I intend to start work in the Punjab after a few days' more rest in the Punjab hills. The Punjab and Rajputana are indeed fields for work.

My health was very bad recently. Now I am very slowly recovering. It will be alright if I stay in the hills for some more days.

Amritsar. 2-9-97 – Today, I am leaving by the 2 O'Clock train with all my party for Kashmir. The recent stay at Dharamsala hills has improved my health much, and the tonsilitis, fever, etc. have completely disappeared..... Niranjan, Latu, Krishna Lal, Dinanath, Gupta and Achyut are all going to Kashmir with me.

Srinagar (Kashmir). 13-9-97 - Now Kashmir. There is no place so beautiful as this, and the people also are fair and good-looking, though their eyes are not beautiful. But, I have also never seen elsewhere villages and towns so horribly dirty. In Srinagar, I am now putting up at the house of Rishibar Babu. He is very hospitable and kind. In a few days, I shall go out somewhere else on excursions, but, while returning, I shall come by way of Srinagar ..As soon as we come down to the plains (Ambala) from Kashmir, I shall go to

Since reaching Dharmasala, I have been all right. I like the cold places; there the body keeps well. I have a desire either to visit a few places in Kashmir and then choose an excellent site and live a quiet life there, or to go on floating on the water. I shall do what the doctor advises. The Raja is not here now. His brother, one just next to him in age, is the Commander-in-Chief. Efforts are being made to arrange a lecture under his chairmanship. If the meeting for the lecture is held in a day or two, I shall stay back, otherwise, I go out again on my travels. Sevier is still in Murree. His health is very bad, going about in jolting *tongas* and *jatkas*. In October I shall go down from here and shall deliver a few lectures in the Punjab. After that, I may go *via* Sind to Cutch, Bhuj and Kathiawar–even down to Poona if circumstances are favourable; otherwise, I go to Rajputana *via* Baroda. From Rajputana, I go to the North-Western Province, then Nepal, and finally Calcutta–this is my present programme. Everything, however, is in God's hands.

Srinagar (Kashmir) ***15-9-97*** - Kashmir is the one land fit for Yogis, to my mind. But the land is now inhabited by a race which, though possessing great physical beauty, is extremely dirty. I am going to travel by water for a month, seeing the sights and getting strong. But the city is very malarious just now, and Sadananda and Kristopal have got fever. Sadananda is all right today, but Kristopal has fever yet. The doctor came today and gave him a purgative. He will be all right by tomorrow, we hope, and we start also tomorrow. The State has lent me one of its barges and it is fine and quite comfortable. They have also sent orders to the

I underwent great religious austerities at Amarnath and then in the temple of Kshir-Bhavani......

On the way to Amarnath, I made a very steep ascent on the mountain Pilgrims do not generally travel by that path But the determination came upon me that I must go by that path, and so I did The labour of the strenuous ascent told on my body

I entered the cave with only my kaupin (loin cloth) on and my body smeared with holy ash, I did not then feel any cold or heat But when I came out of the temple, I was benumbed with cold

I saw three or four white pigeons, whether they live in the cave or the neighbouring hills, I could not ascertain.

I have heard that the sight of the pigeons brings to fruition whatever desires you may have

Since hearing that Divine Voice (in the Kshir Bhavani temple), I cherish no more plans The idea of building Maths, etc. I have given up, as Mother wills so will it be.

Whether it be internal or external, if you actually hear with your ears such a disembodied voice, as I have done, can you deny it and call it false ? Divine Voices are actually heard, just as you and I are talking

Bhavani Devi temple for seven

97 – Reached Murree from Kashmir in the even
of the day before yesterday.

✓ *Murree 10-10-97* - I am soon going to Rawalpi
tomorrow or the day after; then, I visit Lahore and oth
places *via* Jammu, and return to Rajputana *via* Karac
I am doing well.

✓ *Murree 11-10-97* - I feel I have been working a
under an irresistible impulse for the last ten days, begin
ing from Kashmir. It my be either a physical or a men
disease Now I have come to the conclusion that I a
unfit for further work. ....Whatever of Mother's wo
was to be accomplished through me, She made me do
ind has flung me aside breaking down my body a
nind. Her will be done!

Now I retire from all work. In a day or two I sha
ive up every thing and wander about alone I shall spe
he rest of my life quietly in some place or other . I hav
ll along been like a hero, I want my work to be quick lik
ghtning and firm as adamant Similarly, shall I die als
I have never retreated in a fight.. There is success an
ilure in every work But I am inclined to believe tha
ie who is a coward will after death be born as an insec
a worm. there is no salvation for a coward even afte
illions of years of penance. Well, shall I after all b

a million salutations. Their presence purifies the world; they are the saviours of the world. And the others who always wail, "Oh, don't go forward, there is this danger, there is that danger,"—those dyspeptics—they always tremble with fear, But through the grace of the Divine Mother, my mind is so strong that even the most terrible dyspepsia shall not make me a coward—I am the child of the Divine Mother, the source of all power and strength. To me, cringing, fawning, whining, degrading inertia and hell are one and the same thing.

Jammu : 3-11-97 - I am going to write to Sturdy from Lahore, for which I start tomorrow. I have been here for 15 days to get some land in Kashmir from the Maharaja. I intend to come to Kashmir again next summer if I am here, and start some work.

Lahore : 11-11-97 - The lecture at Lahore is over somehow. I shall start for Dehra-Dun in a day or two. I have now postponed my tour to Sind . because of various obstacles.

Probably, I shall leave Sadananda and Sudhir here after establishing a Society.. Now no more lecturing— go in a hurry straight to Rajaputana... Without regular exercise, the body does not keep fit, talking, talking all the time brings illness ..

Lahore : 15-11-97 – In spite of my earnest wishes, do not find it feasible to go to Karachi this time. Owin to my [illegible], I cannot count upon a long life

[illegible] sires to start a Math in Calcutta [illegible], I could do nothing. The people c

my country have withheld the little help they used to give to our Math of late. They have got a notion that I have brought plenty of money from England! It is impossible to celebrate Sri Ramakrishna's Festival this year, for the proprietors of Rasmani's gardens would not let me go there as I am returned from the west! For these reasons I postpone my tour to Sind.

✓ *15-11-97* – My health is good, only I have to get up at night once or twice. I am having sound sleep, sleep is not spoiled even after exhausting lectures; and I am doing exercise everyday...

I start for Dehra-Dun this very day.

✓ *Dehra Dun: 24-11-97* – I am doing well now.

I have been suffering for a long time from some pain at the back of my neck.. The day after tomorrow I am leaving for Saharanpur, from there to Rajputana

✓ *Delhi 8-12-97* – We shall start for Khetri tomorrow Gradually the luggage has greatly increased. After Khetri, I intend to send everybody to the Math (Belur)

Recently, I met at Dehra Dun the Udasi Sadhu, Kalyan Dev, and few others, I hear the people at Hrishikesh are very eager to see me, and are asking again and again about me.

✓ *Khetri. 14-12-97* – I have today sent the power of attorney with my signature A Raja of a place in Bundelkhand named Chatrapur has invited me. I shall visit the place on my way to the Math. The Raja of Limbdi, too, is writing earnestly. I cannot avoid going there also. I shall make a lightning tour of Kathiawar—that is what it will come to ..

✓

Jaipur* : *27-12-97 – I am not very well, but am going to Calcutta in a few days and will be all right.

✓ ***Belur Math*** ***25-2-98*** – My health has not been all right of late, at present, it is much better. Calcutta is unusually cool just now, and the American friends who are here are enjoying it ever so much. Today we take possession of the land we have bought and though it is not practicable to have the Mahotsav (of Sri Ramakrishna) on it just now, I must have something on it on Sunday. Anyhow, Sriji's relics must be taken to our place for the day and worshipped. Every cent I had I have made over to Raja (Brahmananda) as they all say I am a spendthrift, and are afraid to keep money with me.... We have once more started the dancing business (Swamiji humorously alludes to the good old days with Sri Ramakrishna, in whose inspired company he and his brother-disciples used to sing and dance in ecstatic joy) here. Hari, Sarada and my own good self in a

lance at all is a wonder to me!

spare moment is occupied in working for the new Math and several organisations therein, and I expect to leave India next month for America.

2-3-98 – I am working hard to set things all right so that the machine may move forward when I am off the stage. Death I conquered long ago when I gave up life. My only anxiety is the *work* and even that to the Lord I dedicate and He knows best.

Belur Math* · *2-3-98 – It was in southern India, when I came from London and when the people were feteing and feasting and pumping all the work out of me that an old hereditary disease made its appearance... The disease will take two or three years at worst to carry me off.

Darjeeling*. *23-4-98 – My health was excellent on my return from Sandukphu (11,924 ft) and other places, but after returning to Darjeeling, I had first an attack of fever, and after recovering from that I am now suffering from cough and cold I try to escape from this place everyday; but they have been constantly putting it off for a long time However, tomorrow, Sunday, I am leaving, after halting at Kharsana (Kurseong) for a day I start again for Calcutta on Monday.

29-4-98 – I have had several attacks of fever, the last being influenza. It has left me now, only I am very weak yet. As soon as I gather strength enough to undertake the journey, I come down to Calcutta.

If the plague comes to my native city, I am determined to make myself a sacrifice; and that I am sure is

a "Darn sight better way to Nirvana" than pouring oblations to all that ever twinkled .. I am going to start a paper — The Udbodhana — in Calcutta.

Almora: *20-5-98* – After I reached Nainital, Baburam went from here to Nanital on horseback against everybody's advice, and while returning he also accompanied us on horseback. I was far behind as I was in a *dandi*. When I reached the dak bungalow at night, I heard that Baburam had again fallen from the horse and had hurt one of his arms — though he had no fractures. Lest I should rebuke him, he stayed in a private lodging house. He did not meet that night. Next day, I was making arrangements for a *dandi* for him, when I heard that he had already left on foot. Since then I have not heard of him. I have wired to one or two places, but no news. Perhaps, he is putting up at some village. Very well!...

My health is much better, but the dyspepsia has not gone, and again insomnia has set in.

The climate at Almora is excellent at this time. Moreover, the bungalow rented by Sevier is the best in Almora. On the opposite side Annie Besant is staying in a small bungalow with Chakravarty. One day, I went to see him. Annie Besant told me entreatingly that there should be friendship between her organisation and mine all over the world, etc. etc. Today Besant will come here for tea. Our ladies are in a small bungalow nearby and are quite happy. Only Miss MacLeod is a little unwell today. Harry Sevier is becoming more and more a Sadhu as the days pass.

Srinagar · 17-7-98 - My health is alright. I have to get up seldom at night, even though I take twice a day rice and potatoes, sugars or whatever I get. Medicine is useless — it has no action on the system of a knower of Brahman!

Srinagar 1-8 98 - The Maharaja of Kashmir has agreed to give us a plot of land I have also visited the site. Now the matter will be finalised in a few days, if the Lord wills Right now, before leaving, I hope to build a small house here. I shall leave it in the charge of Justice Mukherjee when departing

Kashmir· 25-8-98 - It is a lazy life I have been leading for the last two months, floating leisurely in a boat, which is also my home, up and down the beautiful Jhelum, through the most gorgeous scenery God's world can afford, in nature's own park, where the earth, air, land, grass, plants, trees, mountains, snows and the human form all express on the outside at least, the beauty of the Lord: with almost no possessions, scarcely a pen or inkstand even, snatching up a meal whenever and wherever convenient, the very ideal of a Rip Van Winkle!

Duty is the mid-day sun whose fierce rays are . . . .

Srinagar: 28-8-98 - I have been away a few days. Now, I am going to join the ladies. The party there

goes to a nice quiet spot behind the hill, in a forest, through which a murmuring stream flows, to have meditation deep and long under the deodars (trees of God) cross-legged *a la Buddha*.

Lahore · 16-10-98 - I have not witnessed the Durga Puja for the last nine years So, I am starting for Calcutta

Belur . Nov. 98 - The other day, I was a guest of Babu Priyanath Mukherjee at Baidyanath There I had such a spell of asthma that I felt like dying But from within, with every breath arose the deep-toned sound, "I am He, I am He" Resting on the pillow, I was waiting for the vital breath to depart, and observing all the time that from within was coming the sound of "I am He, I am He!" I could hear along . "एकमेवाद्वयं ब्रह्मनेह नानास्ति किञ्चन।" "The Brahman, the One without a second, alone exists, nothing manifold exists in this world.

Calcutta : 12-11-98 – Sri Mother is going this morning to see the new Math (Belur) I am also going there.

It was at the Cossipore garden that Sri Ramakrishna said to me, "Wherever you will take me on your shoulders, there I will go and stay, be it under a tree or in a hut." It is, therefore, that I myself carried him on my shoulders to the new Math grounds Know it for certain that Sri Ramakrishna will keep his seat fixed there for the welfare of the many, for a long time to come...

Each devotee colours Sri Ramakrishna in the light of his own understanding, and each forms his own ideas

of him from his peculiar standpoint. He was, as it were, a great Sun, and each one of us is eyeing him, as it were through a different kind of coloured glass, and coming to look upon that one Sun as multicoloured.

Belur Math. *15-12-98* – The Mother is our guide and whatever happens or will happen is under Her ordination

The Math *11-4-99* - Two years of physical suffering have taken away twenty years off my life

Belur Math *16-4-99* - If by the sacrifice of some specially cherished object of either myself or my brother disciples, many pure and genuinely patriotic souls come forward to help our cause, we will not hesitate in the least to make that sacrifice, nor shed a tear-drop But my hairs have turned grey since I began the study of man. I have some doubts about those patriotic souls who can join with us if only we give up the worship of the Guru Well, if as they pose, they are indeed panting and struggling so much almost to the point of dissolution from their body to serve the country, how can the single accident of Guru-worship stop everything! If this trifle of Guru-worship serves as a stone to choke one to death, we had better extricate one from this predicament

When the mind and speech unite in earnestly asking for a thing, that prayer is answered.

– *SRI RAMAKRISHNA*

CHAPTER VIII
THE PLAN OF WORK

I am grateful to the lands of the West for the many warm hearts that received me with all the love that pure and disinterested souls alone could give, but my l allegiance is to this my motherland, if I had a thous lives, every moment of the whole series would be c secreted to your service, my countrymen, my friends!

For, to this land I owe whatever I possess, phys mental and spiritual, and if I have been successful in a thing, the glory is yours, not mine Mine alone are weaknesses and failures, as they come through my inat of profiting by the mighty lessons with which this l surrounds one, even from one's very birth.

I am thoroughly convinced that no individual or na can live by holding itself apart from the community others, and whenever such an attempt has been m under false ideas of greatness, policy or holiness— result has always been disastrous to the seceding one.

To my mind, the one great cause of the downfall the degeneration of India was the building of a wal custom—whose foundation was hatred of others—ro the nation, and the real aim of which in ancient ti was to prevent the Hindus from coming in contact with surrounding Buddhistic nations.

A bit of public demonstration was necessary Guru Maharaja's work. It is done and so far so good

I do not believe in a God or religion which car wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to orphan's mouth

I believe in God and I believe in man. I believe helping the miserable. I believe in going to hell to sa others

India has suffered long, the religion eternal has su fered long. But the Lord is merciful. Once more He h come to help His children, once more the opportunity given to fallen India to rise. India can only rise by sittin at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna. His life and his teachin are to be spread far and wide, are to be made to penetrat every pore of Hindu society

My master used to say that these names, Hindu Christian, etc stand as great bars to all brotherly feeling between man and man. We must try to break them dow first. Well, we will have to work hard and must succeed

That is why I desire so much to have a centre. Organisation has its faults, no doubt, but without that nothing can be done.

Sankaracharya had caught the rhythm of the Vedas, the national cadence. Indeed I always imagine that he had some vision such as mine when he was young, and recovered the ancient music that way

But finally the Parliament of Religions opened and I met *kind friends who helped me right along. I worked* a little, collected funds, started two papers, and so on After that I went over to England and worked there. At the same time, I carried on the work for India in America, too.

My *plan for India, as it has been developed and cen*tralised, is this; I have told you of our lives as monks there, (in India) how we go from door to door, so that

religion is brought to everybody without charge, except, perhaps, a broken piece of bread That is why you see the lowest of the low in India holding the most exalted religious ideas But ask a man, "Who are the English?" — he does not know "Who governs you?" "We do not know" "What is the Government?" They don't know But they know philosophy It is a practical want of intellectual education about life on this earth they suffer from These millions and millions of people are ready for life beyond this world—is not that enough for them? Certainly not They must have a better piece of bread and a better of rag on their bodies The great question is how to get that better bread and better rag for these sunken millions

First I must tell you, there is great hope for them, because you see, they are the gentlest people on earth, not that they are timid When they want to fight, they fight like demons The best soldiers the English have, are recruited from the peasantry of India Death is a thing of no importance to them Their attitude is, "Twenty times I have died before, and I shall die many times after this, what of that"? They never turn back They are not given to much emotion, but they make very good fighters

Their instinct, however, is to plough If you rob them, murder them, tax them, do anything to them, they will be quiet and gentle, so long as you leave them free to practise their religion They never interfere with the religion of others. "Leave us liberty to worship our Gods, and take everything else" That is their attitude. Touch them there, trouble starts That was the real

cause of 1857 Mutiny—they would not bear religious repression. The great Mohammedan Governments were simply blown up because they touched India's religion.

Now there is no reason why they should suffer such distress—these people! Oh, so pure and good!

No national civilisation is perfect, yet, give the civilisation a push, and it will arrive at its own goal, don't strive to change it Take away a nation's institutions, customs and manners, and what will be left? They hold the nation together.

But, here comes the very learned foreign man, and he says, "Look here, you give up all those institutions and customs of thousands of years, and take my tomfool tin pot and be happy." This is all nonsense.

We will have to help each other.

And that strikes to the heart The people come to know it.

Well, then, my plans are, therefore, to reach these masses of India.

Now, you see, we have brought the plan down nicely on paper; but I have taken it, at the same time, from the regions of idealism. So far the plan was loose and idealistic. As years went on, it became more and more condensed, I began to see by actual working its defects and all that.

What did I discover in its working on the material plane First, there must be centres, to educate these monks in the method of education...In India, you will find every man quite illiterate, and that teaching requires

tremendous centres. And what does all that mean? Money. From the idealistic plane you come to everyday work Well? I have worked hard for years in America, and two in England.. There are American friends and English friends who come over with me to India, and there has been a very crude beginning Some English people came and joined the Orders One poor man worked hard and died in India... .I have started the Awakened India (Prabuddha Bharat-monthly).. ...I have a centre in the Himalayas . .. I have another centre in Calcutta

The same work I want to do on parallel lines, for women

That part has to be accomplished

My idea is to bring to the door of the meanest, the poorest, the noble ideas that the human race has developed both in and out of India, and let them think for themselves Whether there should be caste or not, whether women should be perfectly free or not, does not concern me.

"Liberty of thought and action is the only condition of life, of growth and well-being"

My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble idea to the door of everybody and then let men and women settle their own fate

Look at that handful of youngmen called into existence by the divine touch of Ramakrishna's feet They have preached the message from Assam to Sindh, from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin. They have crossed

the Himalayas at a height of twenty-thousand feet over snow and ice on foot, and penetrated into the mysteries of Tibet. They have begged their bread, covered themselves with rags; they have been persecuted, followed by the police, kept in prison, and at last set free when the government was convinced of their innocence.

A movement which half a dozen penniless boys set on foot and which bids fair to progress in such an accelerated motion—is it a humbug or the Lord's will?

I have been criticised from one end of the world to the other as one who preaches the diabolical idea that there is no sin! Very good The descendents of these very men will bless me as the preacher of virtue, and not of sin. I am the teacher of virtue, not of sin I glory in being the preacher of light, and not of darkness

Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own people, and I used to shed tears What made the difference? Education was the answer I got

I don't feel tired even if I talk for two whole nights to earnest enquirers, I can give up food and sleep and talk and talk Well, if I have a mind, I can sit up in Samadhi in Himalayan cave. Why then don't I do so? And why am I here? Only the sight of the country's [illegible] the thought of its future do not let me remain [illegible] ear as [illegible] ments becomes insipid! My vow of life is to think of others'

welfare. The day that vow will be fulfilled, I shall leave this body and make a straight run up!

Going round the whole world, I find that people of this country (India) are immersed in great Tamas (inactivity), compared with people of other countries On the outside, there is a simulation of the Sattwa (caln and balanced) state, but inside, down—right inertness lik that of stocks and stones What work will be done ii the world by such people? So my idea is first to mak the people active by developing their Rajas, and thu make them fit for struggle for existence. With n strength in the body, no enthusiasm at heart, and n originality in the brain, what will they do, these lumps c dead matter!

By stimulating them, I want to bring life into then to this, I have dedicated my life I will rouse ther through the infalliable power of Vedic mantras I ai born to proclaim to them that fearless message "Aris Awake!"

Social life in the west is like a peal of laughter, bu underneath it is a wail It ends in a sob The fun an frivolity are all on the surface, really, it is full of trag intensity Now here (in India) it is sad and gloomy o the outside, but underneath are carelessness an merriment

I have never spoken of revenge I have always spoke of strength

Now my own desire is to rouse the country—tl sleeping Leviathan, that has lost faith in its power ar makes no response. If I can wake it up to a sense of tl

Enternal Religion, then I shall know that Sri krishna's advent and our birth are fruitful. That one desire in my heart; Mukti and all else appear consequence to me.

My hope is to see again the strong points of reinforced by the strong points of this age; on natural way The new state of things must be from within.

So, I preach the Upanishads. *If you look, you find that I have never quoted anything but the U shads* And of Upanishads it is only that one *strength.* *The quintessence of the Vedas and Ved* all lies in that one word Budha's teaching was resistance, or non-injury. But I think this is a b way of teaching the same thing ... My own ideal is saint whom they killed in the Mutiny and who broke silence, when stabbed to the heart, to say, "And t also art He."

But you may ask what is the place of Ramakris in this scheme?

His is the method, that wonderful unconsc method! He did not understand himself He kn nothing of England or the English, save that they w queer folk from over the sea But he lived that gr life and I read the meaning Never a word of conde nation for any! Once I had been attacking one of o sects of Diabolism. I had been raving on for three hou and he had listened quietly. "Well, well!" said the o man as I finished, "Perhaps, every house may have a ba door, who knows?"

It is not for me to determine in what sense is Sri Ramakrishna a part of this awakened Hinduism I have never preached personalities My own life is guided by the enthusiasm of this great soul.

[illegible] the sects and [illegible] which all reli- [illegible] was Ramakrishna Paramahamsa? The practical demonstration of this ancient principle, the embodiment of India that is past, and a foreshadowing of the India that is to be, the bearer of spiritual light unto nations

The other day when I installed Sri Ramakrishna on the Math grounds, I felt as if his ideas shot forth from this place and flooded the whole universe, sentient and insentient I, for one, am doing my best, and shall continue to do so... Sankara left the Advaita philosophy in the hills and forests, while I have come to bring it out of those places and scatter it broadcast before the work-a-day world and society.

This Math that we are building will harmonise all creeds, all standpoints Just as Sri Ramakrishna held highly liberal views, this Math too will be a centre for propagating similar ideas The blazing light of universal harmony that will emanate from here will flood the whole world.

Through the will of Sri Ramakrishna, his Dharma-kshetra sanctified spot has been established today. A twelve years' anxiety is off my head.

You see only a little manifestation of what has been done by our labours. In time the whole world must

accept the universal and catholic ideas of Sri Ram krishna and of this, only the beginning has been mad Before this flood, everybody will be swept off.

That activity and self-reliance must come in th people of the country in time I see it clearly Ever sinc the advent of Sri Ramakrishna, the eastern horizon ha been aglow with the dawning rays of the sun which ir course of time, will illumine the country with the splendour of the midday sun

It is my opinion that Sri Ramakrishna was born to vivify all branches of art and culture in this country (India)

If but a thorn pricks the foot of one who has surrendered himself to Sri Ramakrishna, it makes my bones ache; all others I love You will find very few men so unsectarian as I am, but you must excuse me, I have got that bit of bigotry If I do not appeal to his name, whose else shall I? In this birth, it is that unlettered Brahmin who has bought this body of mine for ever

This boy born of poor Brahmin parents, is literally worshipped in lands which have been fulminating against heathen worship for centuries Whose powers is it? It is none else than the power which was manifested here as Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Here has been a manifestation of an immense power, just the very beginning of whose workings we are seeing, and before this generation passes away, you will see more wonderful workings of that power. It has come just in time for the regeneration of India

It seemed that we were going to change the theme in our national life, that we were going to exchange the backbone of our existence, as it were, that we were trying to replace a spiritual by a political backbone If it all could have succeeded, the result would have been annihilation But it was not to be So, this power became manifest I do not care in what light you understand this great sage, it matters not how much respect you pay to him, but I challenge you with the fact that here is a manifestation of the most marvellous power that has been for several centuries in India Long before ideas of universal religion and brotherly feeling between different sects were mooted and discussed in any country in the world, here in the sight of the city of Calcutta had been living a man whose life was a Parliament of Religions, as it should be

Such a hero has been given to us in the person of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa If this nation wants to rise, take my word for it, it will have to rally enthusiastically round his name

It does not matter who preaches Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, whether I or you or anybody else But, him I place before you for the good of our race, for the good of our nation One thing is sure that It was the purest of all lives that you have ever seen, or, let me tell you distinctly, that you have ever heard of Within ten years of his passing away, this power has encircled the globe. Judge him not through me I am only a weak instrument. Let not his character be judged by seeing me. It was so great that if I, or any other of his disciples

spent hundreds of lives we could not do justice to a millionth part of what he really was.

I, through the grace of God, had the great good fortune of sitting at the feet of one, whose whole life was an interpretation of the underlying harmony of the Upanishadic texts, whose life, a thousandfold more than whose teaching, was a living commentary on the texts of the Upanishads, was, in fact, the spirit of Upanishads lying in a human form. Perhaps, I have got a little of that harmony

Jnanam is all right but there is the danger of its becoming dry intellectualism Love is great and noble, but it may die away in meaning-less sentimentalism A harmony of all these is the thing required Ramakrishna was such a harmony Such beings are few and far between, but keeping him and his teachings as the ideal, we can move on

God though everywhere, can be known to us in and through human character No character was ever so perfect as Ramakrishna, and that would be the centre round which we ought to rally, at the same time, allowing everybody to regard him in his own light either as God, Saviour, teacher, model or great man, just as he pleases

My hopes of the future lies in the youths of character — intelligent, renouncing all for the service of others, and obedient — who can sacrifice their lives in working my ideas and thereby do good to themselves and the country at large. If I [illegible]

the faith of Nachiketa, I can turn the thoughts and pursuits of this country in a new channel.

I once met a man in my country whom I had known before as a very stupid, dull person, who knew nothing and had not the desire to know anything, and was living the life of a brute. He asked what he should do to know God, how he was to get free. "Can you tell a lie?", "It is better to tell a lie than to be a brute, or a log of wood. You are inactive, you have not certainly reached the highest state, which is beyond all actions, calm and serene, you are too dull even to do something wicked." That was an extreme case of course, and I was joking with him; but what I meant was that a man must be active, in order to pass through activity to perfect calmness.

Sometimes, I feel a desire to sell the Math and everything and distribute the money to the poor and destitute... When I was in the western countries, I prayed to the Divine Mother, "People here are sleeping on a bed of flowers, they eat all kinds of delicacies, and what do they not enjoy? while people in our country are dying of starvation. Mother, will there be no way for them?" One of the objects of my going to the West to preach religion was to see if I could find any means for feeding the people

God is present in every Jiva, there is no other God besides that, "Who serves Jiva, serves God indeed."

This body is born and it will die If I have been able to instill a few of my ideas into you all, then I shall know that my birth has not been in vain

I was born for the life of a scholar—retired—quiet—poring over my books But the mother dispenses otherwise yet the tendency is there.

Today the Americans, out of love, have given me this nice bed and I have something to eat also But, I have not been destined to enjoy physically, and lying on the matteresses only aggravates my illness, I feel suffocated as it were I have to come down and lie on the floor for relief

I do not see into the future, nor do I care to see. But, one vision I see clear as life before me that the ancient Mother (India) has awakened once more, sitting on her throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than ever

My teaching is my own interpretation of our ancient books, in the light which my Master shed upon them I claim no supernatural authority

1899 – A very funny thing happened today I went to a friend's house He has had a picture painted, the subject of which is Sri Krishna addressing Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra Sri Krishna is standing in the chariot, holding the reins in His hand, and preaching the Gita to Arjuna He showed me the picture and asked me how I like it "Fairly well," I said, But as he insisted on having my criticism on it, I had to give my honest opinion by saying, "There is nothing in it to commend itself to me; first, because the chariot of the time of Sri Krishna was

not like the modern Pagoda-shaped car, and also there is no expression in the figure of Sri Krishna The kings never used to fight in pagoda-chariots. There are chariots even today in Rajputana that greatly resemble the chariots of old.

"See the chariots in the pictures of Grecian mythology They have two wheels, and one mounts them from behind, we had that sort of chariot What good is it to paint a picture if the details are wrong? An historical picture comes up to a standard of excellence when, after making proper study and research, things are portrayed exactly as they were at that period The truth must be represented, otherwise the picture is nothing To paint a really good picture requires as much talent as to produce a perfect drama."

path of Dharma to Arjuna, who had been overcome by infatuation and cowardice " So, saying, I posed myself in the way in which Sri Krishna should be portrayed and continued, "Look here, thus does he hold the bridle of the horses, with their forelegs fighting the air and their mouths gaping. This will show a tremendous play of action in the figure of Sri Krishna His friend, the *world-renowned hero, casting aside his bow* and arrows, has sunk down like a coward on the chariot, in the midst of the two armies And Sri Krishna, whip in one hand and tightening the reins with the other, has turned Himself to Arjuna, with his childlike face beaming with

CHAPTER IX

SECOND VISIT TO AMERICA AND THE PARIS CONGRESS

June, 1899 - It took us two days to get out of the Hooghly

Our ship reached the sea

There fell upon my ears the deep and sonorous music of commingled male and female voices, singing in chorus the British national anthem, "Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves!" Startled, I looked around and found that the ship was rolling heavily, and brother T - holding his head with his hands, was struggling against an attack of sea-sickness

In the second class two Bengali youths were going to the West for study Their condition was worse One of them looked so frightened that he would have been only too glad to scuttle straight home if he were allowed to land These two lads and we two were the only Indians on the ship - the representatives of modern India!

In the night of the 24th June, our ship reached Madras Getting up from bed in the morning, I found that we were within the enclosed space of the Madras harbour. Within the harbour the water was still, but without, towering waves were roaring, which occasionally dashing the harbour-wall, were shooting up fifteen or twenty feet high into the air and breaking in a mass of foam In front lay the well-known Strand Road of Madras Two European

police inspectors, a Madrasi Jamadar and a dozen constables boarded our ship and told me with great courtesy that "natives" were not allowed to land on the shore, but the Europeans were.., but the Madrasis had asked for a special permission for me. By degrees the Madrasi friends began to come near our vessel on boats in small groups. As all contact was strictly forbidden, we could only speak from the ship, keeping some space between. I found all my friends - Alasinga, Biligiri, Narasimhachary, Dr. Nanjunda Row, Kidi, and others on the boats. Basketfuls of mangoes, plantains, cocoanuts, cooked rice-and-curd and heaps of sweet and salt delicacies, etc. began to come in. Gradually the crowd thickened - men, women and children, and boats everywhere. I found also Mr. Chamier, my English friend who had come out to Madras as a barrister-at-law. Ramakrishnananda and Nirbhayananda made some trips near to the ship. They insisted on staying on the boat the whole day in the hot sun, and I had to remonstrate with them, when they gave up the idea.

As the news of my not being permitted to land got abroad, the crowd of boats began to increase still more. I, too, began to feel exhaustion from leaning against the railings too long. Then I bade farewell to my Madrasi friends and entered my cabin. Alasinga got no opportunity to consult with me about the *Brahmavadin* and the Madras work, so he was going to accompany me to Colombo. The ship left the harbour in the evening, when I heard a great shout, and peeping through the cabin window, I found that about a thousand Madrasi men, women and children who had been sitting on the harbour walls, gave this farewell shout when the ship started.

It took us four days to go from Madras to Ceylon. That rising and heaving of waves which had commenced from the mouth of the Ganges began to increase as we advanced, and after we had left Madras, it increased still more The ship began to roll heavily, and the passengers were terribly sea-sick, and so were the two Bengali boys. One of them was certain he was going to die, and we had to console him with great difficulty, assuring him that there was nothing to be afraid of, as it was quite a common experience and nobody ever died of it. The second class, again, was right over the screw of the ship. The two Bengali lads, being "natives," were put into a cabin almost like a blackhole, where neither air nor light had any access So the boys could not remain in the room and on the deck the rolling was terrible Again, when the prow of the ship settled into the hollow of a wave and the stern was pitched up, the screw rose clear out of the water and continued to wheel in the air, giving tremendous jolting to the whole vessel. And the second class then shook as when a rat is seized by a cat and shaken!

This was monsoon season The more the ship proceeded, the more gale and wind she had to encounter The Madrasis had given plenty of fruits, the greater part of which and the sweets and rice-and-curd, etc. I gave to the boys Alasinga had hurriedly bought a ticket and boarded the ship barefooted ...Editor of the *Brahmavadin*, Alasinga, a Mysore Brahmin of the Ramanuja sect, had brought with him with great care, as his provision for the voyage, two small bundles, in one of which there was fried flattened rice and in another popped rice and fried

peas! His idea was to live upon these during the vo
to Ceylon, so that his caste might remain intact. H
er, one rarely finds men like our Alasinga in this w
one so unselfish, so hard-working, and devoted t
Guru, and such an obedient disciple is indeed very
on earth. A Madrasi by birth, with his head shaven
to leave a tuft in the centre, barefooted, and wearin
dhoti, he got into the first class. When hungry, he
chewed some of the popped rice and peas!

Alasinga did not feel sea sick Brother T. felt a little trouble at the beginning but was then all right. So the four days passed in various pleasant talks and gossip

Once I was preaching at Anuradhapuram (Ceylon) among the Hindus-not Buddhists-and that in an open maidan, not on anybody's property, when a whole host of Buddhist monks and laymen, men and women, came out beating drums and cymbals and set up an awful uproar The lecture had to stop, of course, and there was the imminent risk of bloodshed With great difficulty I had to persuade the Hindus that we at any rate might practise a bit of non-injury (Ahimsa) if they did not. Then the matter ended peacefully

Our Colombo friends had procured a permit for our landing So we landed and met our friends Sir Coomara Swami is the foremost man among the Hindus Mr Arunachalam and other friends came to meet me After a long time, I partook of mullagutawny, and the king cocoanut They put some green cocoanuts into my cabin I also visited the monastery and school of our old acquai-

Alasinga returned to Madras from Colombo, and we also got on board our ship, with presents of some lemons from the orchard of Kumaraswamy, some cocoanuts, two bottles of syrup, etc.

The ship left Colombo in the morning of 25th June (1899) Owing to the rolling of the ship, most of the passengers were suffering from headache A little girl named Tootle was accompanying her father. She had lost her mother. Our Nivedita became mother to Tootle. Tootle was brought up in Mysore with her father who is a planter. I asked her, "Tootle, how are you?" She replied, "This bungalow is not good and rolls very much, which makes me sick" To her every house was a bungalow!

On the 14th of July, the steamer cleared the Red Sea and reached Suez. The Suez Canal is now the link between Europe and Asia.

This is a very beautiful natural harbour, surrounded almost on three sides by sandy mounds and hillocks, the water also is very deep. There are innumerable fish and sharks in it.

As soon as we heard of the sharks moving about behind the ship - I had never an opportunity to see live sharks - we hastened to the spot. But our friends, the sharks, had moved off a little. We were watching - half an hour, three quarters, we were almost tired of it when somebody announced - there he was. Casting my eyes I found that at some distance, a huge black thing was moving towards us, six or seven inches below the surface of the water. The huge flat head was visible. A gigantic fish.

One of the second class passengers, a military man, found out a terrible hook. To this, they tightly fastened two pounds of meat with a strong cord, and a stout cable tied to it. About six feet from it, a big piece of wood was attached to act as a float. Then the hook with the float was dropped in the water. We in eagerness stood on tiptoe, leaning over the railing and anxiously waited for the shark. Suddenly, about a hundred yards from the ship, something of the shape of a water carrier's leather bag, but much larger, appeared above the surface of the water. The shark rushed close by and put the bait

fish has, what struggles he made! He turned and turned in the water Alas, he extricated himself from the bait! The shark fled, getting rid of the hook And he was tiger-like, having black stripes over his body like a tiger

There, another huge flat-headed crature! Moving near the hook and examining the bait, he put it in his jaws He turned on his side and swallowed it whole leisurely When about to depart, immediately there was the pull from behind! "Flat-head" astonished, jerked his head and wanted to throw the bait off, but it made matters worse! The hook pierced him, and from above, men young and old began to pull violently at the cable. There, about half the shark's body was above water. Oh, what jaws! The whole of it was clear of water. Now he was set on the deck What a big shark! And with what a thud he fell on board the ship! The military man with body and clothes splashed with blood raised the beam and began to land heavy blows on the shark's head. I had my meal almost spoilt that day – everything smelt of that shark

The Suez Canal is a triumph of Canal engineering, it is also a thing of remote antiquity By connecting the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, it has greatly facilitated commerce between Europe and India Now comes the Mediterranean It marks the end of Asia, Africa and of ancient civilisation We now enter Europe. The borders of this Mediterranean were the birth place of that European Civilisation which has now conquered the world

The ship touched Naples, - we reached Italy The capital of Italy is Rome - Rome, the capital of that ancient

Ridgely Manor (N Y.) 14-9-99 – I have simpl
been taking rest at the Leggett's and doing nothing
Abhedananda is here He has been working hard.

N Y. 22-12-99 – I had a slight relapse of late
for which the healer has rubbed several inches of my ski
off Just now I am feeling it, the smart.

I had a very hopeful note from Margo (Margaret I
Noble)... I am grinding on in Pasadena I hope some resu
will come out of my work here Some people here ar
very enthusiastic. The Raja-Yoga book did indeed grea
service on this coast. I am mentally very well, indeed;
never really was so well as of late. The lectures for or
thing do not disturb my sleep, that is some gain I a
doing some writing, too The lectures here were take
down by a stenographer, the people here want to pri
them

Slowly as usual plans are working, but Mother know
as I say May She give me release and find other worke
for her plans! I have made a discovery as to the men
method of really practising what the Gita teaches,
working without an eye to results I have seen mu
light on concentration and attention, and control of co
centration which if practised will take us out of all anx
ty and worry. It is really the science of bottling up
minds whenever we like. Mrs. Legget is doing well;
is Joe. I, they say, I too, am. Maybe they are right.
work anyway and want to die in harness; if that be w
Mother wants, I am quite content

Los Angeles: Dec. 6, 99 – If I did not break
heart over my people I was born amongst, I would do

and most powerful Roman Empire After leaving Naples the ship called at Marseilles, and thence straight to London.

ENGLAND

Wimbledon : 3-8-99 – We are in at last. Turiyananda and I have beautiful lodgings here... I have recovered quite a bit by the voyage... It is nice and warm here, rather too much, they say I have become for the present a Sunyavadi, a believer in nothingness or void! No plans, no after-thought, no attempt, for anything. *Laissez faire to the fullest!!!*

What is this osteopathy? Will they cut off a rib or two to cure me? Not I, no manufacturing from my ribs, sure! Whatever it be, it will be hard work for him to find my bones. My bones are destined to make corals in the Ganges

I am going to study French.. but no grammar business

I expect to be in New York in a few weeks, and don't know what next

No one ever landed on English soil with more hatred in his heart for a race than I did for the English, but the more I lived among them and saw how the machine was working - the English national life, - and mixed with them, I found where the heartbeat of the nation was, and the more I loved them.

AMERICA

The Americans' kindness to me is past all narration; it would take me years yet to tell how I have been treated by them, most kindly and most wonderfully.

Ridgely Manor (N.Y) 14-9-99 – I have simpl
been taking rest at the Leggett's and doing nothin
Abhedananda is here He has been working hard

N.Y. : 22-12-99 – I had a slight relapse of lat
for which the healer has rubbed several inches of my sk
off Just now I am feeling it, the smart.

I had a very hopeful note from Margo (Margaret
Noble) .., I am grinding on in Pasadena ! hope some resu
will come out of my work here Some people here a
very enthusiastic, The Raja-Yoga book did indeed gre
service on this coast I am mentally very well, indeed,
never really was so well as of late The lectures for o
thing do not disturb my sleep, that is some gain I a
doing some writing, too The lectures here were tak
down by a stenographer, the people here want to pr
them

Slowly as usual plans are working, but Mother kno
as I say. May She give me release and find other work
for her plans ! I have made a discovery as to the men
method of really practising what the Gita teaches,
working without an eye to results I have seen m

minds whenever we like Mrs Legget is doing well;
is Joe; I, they say, I too, am Maybe they are right
work anyway and want to die in harness; if that be w
Mother wants, I am quite content.

Los Angeles: Dec. 6, 99 – If I did not break
heart over my people I was born amongst, I would d

for somebody else I am sure of that. This is the way of some, I am coming to see it. We are all after happiness, true, but that some are only happy in being unhappy - queer, is it not?

There is no harm in it either, except that happiness and unhappiness are both infectious. Ingersol said once that if he were God, he would make health catching, instead of disease, little dreaming that health is quite as catching as disease, if not more!

12-12-99 - My mistakes have been great, but everyone of them was from too much love. Would I never had any Bhakti!

I went years ago to the Himalayas, never to come back; but my sister committed suicide, the news reached me there, and that weak heart flung me off from that prospect of peace! It is the weak heart that has driven me out of India to seek some help for those I love, and here I am! Peace have I sought, but the heart, that seat of Bhakti, would not allow me to find it. Struggle and torture, torture and struggle!

Yet, let the world come, the hell come, the God come, let Mother come, I fight and do not give in. Ravana got his re[illegible] births by fighting the

work already, and have sent to Saradananda (Belur Math) Rs 1,300/- already.. . . .I shall send more, if they need it............Poor boys! How hard I am on them at times!

Well, they know in spite of all that I am their best friend

I am at my best when I am alone. Mother seems to arrange so Joe (Miss Josephine Macleod) believes great things are brewing in Mother's cup, hope it is so . .I can only say, every blow I had in this life, every pang, will *only become joyful sacrifice if Mother becomes propitious* to India once more

The Raja-Yoga book seems to be very well - known here......

Joe has unearthed a magnetic healing woman We both are under her treatment Joe thinks she is pulling me up splendidly. On her has been worked a miracle, she claims Whether it is magnetic healing, California ozone, or the end of the present spell of bad karma, I am improving It is a great thing to be able to walk three miles, even after a heavy dinner.

It is exactly like Northern Indian winter here, only some days a little warmer The roses are here and the beautiful palms Barley is in the fields, roses and many other flowers round about the cottage where I live. Mrs. Blodgett, my host, is a Chicago lady. Fat, old and extremely witty. She heard me in Chicago and is very motherly..... I shall be very happy if I can make a lot of money. I am making some.

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Los Angeles: 23-12-99 - I am all right. The wheel is turning up. Mother is working it up. She cannot ' me go before Her work is done.

Los Angeles : 27-12-99 - I am health - able enough to work once more

ˇ *San Francisco . 4-3-1900* – My health is about the same, don't find much difference, it is improving perhaps but very imperceptibly I can use my voice, however, to make 3,000 people hear me as I did twice in Oakland, and get good sleep too after two hours of speaking.

ˇ *San Francisco 7-3-1900* – I am so so in health No money Hard work No result. Worse than Los Angeles. They come in crowds when the lecture is free-when there is payment, they don't

✓ *Almeda Calif : 20-4-1900* – A kind lady has given me a pass up to New York to be used within three months. The Mother will take care of me. She is not going to strand me now after guarding me all my life.

Almeda Calif · 30-4-1900 – Sudden indisposition l fever prevent my starting for Chicago yet I will 't as I am strong for the journey. ....

Almeda Calif · 2-5-1900 – I have been very ill, one relapse brought about by months of hard work.

ew York : 11-5-1900 - I have been much censured yone for cutting off my long hair.........I had been ut and came back yesterday Trying as soon as to go to France, then to India ...

Angeles : 17-6-1900 – Kali worship is not a y step in any religion. The Upanishads teach us there is of religion Kali worship is my special only preach what is good for universal humanity. e is any curious method which applies entirely to keep it a secret and there it ends I never taught worship to any body......

Los Angeles: 17-1-1900 - I have been abl remit Rs. 2,000/- to Saradananda with the help of MacLeod and Mrs. Leggett Of course, they contrib the best part The rest was got by lectures......

I am decidedly better in health The healer thin am not at liberty to go anywhere I choose; the process go on and I shall completely recover in a few months I am here principally for health...

Now it occurs to me that my mission from the pl form is finished.

Los Angles: 15-2-1900 - Going to San Francis next week

Pasadena: 20-2-1900 - I have lost many relative suffered much, and the most curious cause of sufferin when somebody goes off is the feeling that I was not goo enough to that person When my father died, it was pang for months, and I had been so disobedient.....I wa in the glare, burning and panting all the time......My lif is made up of continuous blows, because of poverty treachery and my own foolishness!

California: 21-2-1900 - Wordy warfares, texts and scriptures, doctrines and dogmas - all these I am coming to loathe as poison, in this my advanced age.

San Francisco: 2-3-1900 - I am busy making money only I do not make much......I have to make enough to pay my passage home at any rate. Here is a new field, where I find ready listeners by hundreds prepared beforehand by my books.

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where arrangements for meals were in a right royal style, but for bath-well, no name of it. Two days I suffered silently - till at last I could bear it no longer, and had to address my friend thus "Dear brother, let this royal luxury be with you and yours! I am panting to get out of this situation, such hot weather, and no facility of bathing, if it continues like this, I shall be in imminent danger of turning mad like a rabid dog" Hearing this, my friend became very sorry for me and annoyed with the hotel authorities, and said, "I won't let you stay here any more, let us go and find out a better place"

Twelve of the chief hotels were seen, but no place for bathing was there in any of them! There are independent bathing-houses, where one can go and have a bath for four or five rupees. Good heavens! That afternoon I read in a paper that an old lady entered into the bath-tub and died then and there! Whatever the doctors may say, I am inclined to think that perhaps, that was the first occasion in her life to come into contact with so much water, and the frame collapsed by the sudden shock!! This is no exaggeration

No nation in the world is as cleanly in the body as the Hindu who uses water very freely

France - a picturesque country, neither very cold nor very warm, very fertile weather neither excessively wet nor extremely dry Sky clear, sun sweet, elms and oaks in abundance, grasslands charming, hills and rivers small, springs delightful. Excepting some parts of China, no other country in the world have I seen that is so beautiful as France......The rich and the poor, the young and the

visited every museum and made herself acquainted with the men and women, and their dress, the streets and bathing ghats and everything relating to India. Madame Bernhardt has a desire to visit India

Madamoiselle Calve will not sing this winter, and is going to temperate climates like Egypt, etc I am going as her guest. Calve has not devoted herself to music alone, she is sufficiently learned, and has a great love for philosophical and religious literature

She was born amidst very poor circumstances There is no better teacher than pain and poverty! That extreme penury and pain and hardship of childhood, a constant struggle against which has won for Calve her victory, have engendered a remarkable sympathy, and a profound seriousness in her life.

Western music is very good, there is in it a perfection of harmony, which we (Indians) have not attained Only, to our untrained ears it does not sound well, hence, we do not like it and we think that the singers howl like jackals. I also had the same sort of impression, but when I began to listen to the music with attention and study it minutely, I came more and more to understand it, and I was lost in admiration.

What is meant by bath in the West? Why, the washing of face, head and hands, i. e only those parts which are exposed. A millionaire friend of mine once invited me to come over to Paris - Paris, which is the capital of modern civilisation - Paris, the heaven of luxury, fashion and merriment on earth - the centre of arts and sciences My frie[illegible] accommodated me in a huge palatial hotel,

where arrangements for meals were in a right royal style, but for bath-well, no name of it Two days I suffered silently - till at last I could bear it no longer, and had to address my friend thus "Dear brother, let this royal luxury be with you and yours! I am panting to get out of this situation, such hot weather, and no facility of bathing, if it continues like this, I shall be in imminent danger of turning mad like a rabid dog." Hearing this, my friend became very sorry for me and annoyed with the hotel authorities, and said, "I won't let you stay here any more, let us go and find out a better place "

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old, the fields, the gardens, the walks, so artistically neat and clean - the whole country looks like a picture Such love of nature and art have I seen nowhere except in Japan.

We had two other companions on the journey as far as Constantinople - Pera Hyacinthe *alias* Mons. Loyson and his wife

One special benefit I got from the company of those ladies and gentlemen was that except the one American lady, no one knew English and consequently somehow or other I had to talk as well as hear French

From Paris our friend Maxim had supplied me with letters of introduction to various places, so that the countries might be properly seen. Maxim is the inventor of the famous Maxim gun - the gun that sends off a continuous round of balls, and is loaded and discharged automatically, without intermission An admirer of India and China, Maxim is a good writer on religion, philosophy, etc. Having read my works long since, he holds me in great - I should say, excessive admiration.

The tour programme was as follows · from Paris to Vienna and thence to Constantinople, by rail; then by steamer to Athens and Greece, then across the Mediterranean to Egypt, then Asia Minor, Jerusalem, and so on

Paris, in the year 1900 was the centre of the civilised world, for it was the year of the Paris Exhibition and there was an assemblage of eminent men and women from all quarters of the globe. The master minds of all countries had met in Paris to spread the glory of their respective countries by means of their genius From among that

white galaxy of geniuses, there stepped forth one distinguished youthful hero to proclaim the name of our Motherland - it was the world-renowned scientist Dr. J C Bose Alone, the youthful Bengali physicist, with his galvanic quickness charmed the Western audience with his splendid genius. Well done, hero!

I took a round over the Paris Exhibition - that accumulated mass of dazzling ideas, like lightning held steady as it were, that unique assemblage of celestial panorama on earth!

In this Paris Exhibition, the Congress of the History of Religions sat for several days together. At the Congress, there was no room for the discussions on the doctrines and spiritual views of any religion, its purpose was only to enquire into the historic evolution of the different forms of established faiths, and along with it other accompanying facts that are incidental to it Accordingly, the representation of the various missionary sects of different religions and their beliefs was entirely left out of account in this Congress. The Chicago Parliament of Religions was a grand affair and the representatives of many religious sects from all parts of the world were present in it This Congress, on the other hand, was attended only by such scholars as devoted themselves to the study of the origin and history of different religions. At the Chicago Parliament ~~the influence of~~ the Roman Catholics expected to establish their superiority over the Protestants without much opposition, by proclaiming their glory and strength and laying the bright side of their faith before the assem-
hristians, Hindus, *Bauddhas*, Mussalmans and other
f the world religions and publicly expos-

ing their weakness, they hoped to make firm their own position. But the result proving otherwise, the Christian world has been deplorably hopeless of the reconciliation of the different religious systems so the Roman catholics are now particularly opposed to the repetition of any such gathering. France is a Roman catholic country, hence, in spite of the earnest wish of the authorities, no religious congress was convened on account of the vehement opposition on the part of the Roman Catholic world

The Congress of the History of Religions at Paris was like the Congress of Orientalists

From Asia only three Japanese Pandits were present at the Congress. From India, there was the present writer

The conviction of many of the Sanskrit scholars of the West is that the Vedic religion is the outcome of the worship of the fire, the sun and other awe-inspiring objects of natural phenomena.

I was invited by the Paris Congress to contradict this conviction, and I promised to read a paper on the subject. But I could not keep my promise on account of ill health and with difficulty was only able to be personally present at the Congress where I was most warmly received by all the western Sanskrit scholars whose admiration for this scribe was all the greater, as they had already gone through many of my lectures on the Vedanta

At the Congress, Mr. Gustav Oppert, a German

to him, the Siva Lingam is the phallic emblem of the male, and the Salagrama of the female generative principle. And thus he wanted to establish that the worship of the Siva Linga and that of the Salagrama – both are but the component parts of the worship of Lingam and Yoni!

I repudiated the above two views and said that though I had heard of such ridiculous explanations about the Siva Lingam, the other theory of the Salagramasila was quite new and strange, and seemed groundless to me

I also said that the worship of the Siva Lingam originated from the famous hymn in the Atharva Veda Samhita sung in praise of the Yupastambha, the sacrificial post In that hymn a description is found of the beginingless and endless Stambha or Skambha, and it is shown that the said Skambha is put in place of the eternal Brahman As, afterwards, the Yajna (Sacrificial) fire, its smoke, ashes and flames, the Soma plant and the ox that used to carry on its back the wood for the Vedic sacrifice, gave place to the conceptions of the brightness of Siva's body, his tawny matted hair, his blue throat, and the riding on the bull of the Siva, and so on Just so, the Yupa-Skambha gave place in time to the Siva-Lingam and was deified to the high Devahood of Sri Sankara In the Atharva Veda Samhita, the sacrificial cakes are also extolled along with the attributes of Brahman.

In the Linga Purana, the same hymn is expanded in the shape of stories, meant to establish the glory of the great Stambha and the superiority of Mahadeva.

Again, there is another fact to be considered The *Bauddhas* used to erect memorial topes consecrated to the memory of Buddha, and the very poor, who were unable to build big monuments, used to express their devotion to him by dedicating miniature substitutes for them Similar instances are still in the case of Hindu temples in Banaras and other sacred places of India, where those who cannot afford to build temples, dedicate very small temple like constructions instead So, it might be quite probable that during the period of Buddhistic ascendency, the rich Hindus, in imitation of the Bauddhas, used to erect something as a memorial resembling their Skambha, and the poor in a similar manner copied them on a reduced scale, and, afterwards, the miniature memorials of the poor Hindus became a new addition to the Skambha.

One of the names of the Buddha Stupas (memorial topes) is Dhatugarbha, that is "metal-wombed." Within the Dhatu-garbha, in small cases made of stone, shaped like the present Salagrama, used to preserve the ashes, hones and other remains of the distinguished Bauddha Bhikshus, along with gold, silver and other metals The Salagrama-silas are natural stones resembling in form these artificially cut stone-cases of the Bauddha Dhatu-garbhs, and thus, being first worshipped by the Bauddhas, gradually got into Vaishnavism, like many other forms of Buddhistic worship that found their way into Hinduism. On the banks of the Narmada and in Nepal, the Buddhi-

He discovered me a few years ago and has already translated some of my pamphlets into French

I shall travel with Madame Calve, Miss MacLeod and M Jules Bois, I shall be the guest of Madame Calve, the famous singer

We shall go to Constantinople, the Near East, Greece and Egypt On our way back, we shall visit Venice

It may be that I shall give a few lectures in Paris after my return, but they will be in English with an interpreter...

I am sending all the money I earned in America to India, now I am free, the begging - monk as before. I have also resigned from the Presidentship of the monastery.

M Jules Bois is very modest and gentle, and though a man of ordinary means, he very cordially received me as a guest into his house in Paris Then, he was accompanying us for travel

In the evening of October 24,1900 the train left Paris The night was dark and nothing could be seen. Monsieur Bois and myself occupied one compartment, and early went to bed On awakening from sleep we found we had crossed the French frontier and entered German territory I had already seen Germany thoroughly.

The whole day the train rushed through Germany, till in the afternoon it reached the frontiers of Austria, the ancient sphere of German supremacy, but now an alien territory.

n the evening of October 25, the train reached a, the capital of Austria. There were few passen-

And what your European Pandits say about the Aryans' sweeping down from some foreign land, snatching away the lands of the aborigines and settling in India by exterminating them, is all pure nonsense, foolish talk! Strange that our Indian scholars, too, say amen to them and all these monstrous lies are being taught to our boys! This is very bad indeed.

I am an ignoramus myself. I do not pretend to any scholarship, but with the little that I understand I strongly protested against these ideas at the Paris Congress.

I have been talking with the Indian and European savants on the subject, and hope to raise many objections to this theory in detail when the time permits

Paris – Now I am staying on the sea coast of France The session of the Congress of History of Religion is over. It was not a big affair, some twenty scholars chattered a lot on the origin of the Salagrama and the origin of Jehovah, and similar topics. I also said something on the occasion

Paris 9-1900 – The body is somehow rolling on. Work makes it ill, and rest makes it well - that is all. Mother knows...Nivedita has gone to England. She and Mrs Bull are collecting funds.

Paris 14-10-1900 – I am staying with a famous French writer. M. Jules Bois. I am his guest As he is a man making his living with his pen, he is not rich, but we have many great ideas in common and feel happy

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gers, and it did not take us much time to show our luggage and have it passed. A hotel had already been arranged for, and a man from the hotel was waiting for us with a carriage: we reached the hotel duly. It was out of question to go out for sight-seeing during the night; so the next morning we started to see the town

Vienna is a small city after the model of Paris The thing most worth seeing in Vienna is the Museum, specially the scientific Museum, an institution of great benefit to the students Three days in Vienna were sufficient to tire me

On the 28th Oct., at 9 P M, we again took that Orient Express train, which reached Constantinople on the 30th. These two nights and one day, the train ran through Hungary, Serbia and Bulgaria.

Formerly, I had the notion that people of cold climates did not take hot chillies, which was merely a bad habit of warm climate people. But the habit of taking chillies, which we observed to begin with Hungary and which reached its climax in Rumania, Bulgeria, etc. appeared to me to beat even the Madrasis!

The first view of Constantinople we had from the train At the station we had great trouble over our books Madamoiselle Calve and Jules Bois tried much, in

quarrel ended without further complications. They returned all the books with the exception of two which they heldback. They promised to send them to the hotel

immediately, which they never did. We went round the town and bazar of Stamboul, or Constantinople

Beyond the Pont, or creek, is the Pera or foreigner's quarters, hotels etc whence we got into a carriage, saw the town and then took some rest. In the evening, we went to visit Woods Pasha, and the next day, started on an excursion along the Bosphorus in a boat It was extremely cold and there was a strong wind So I and Miss M-got down at the first station It was decided that we would cross over the Scutari and see Pere Hyacinthe Not knowing the language we engaged a boat by signs merely, crossed over and hired a carriage On the way, we saw the seat of a Sufi Fakir.

We had a long talk with Pere Hyacinthe about the American colleges, after which we went to an Arab shop where we met a Turkish student Then we returned from Scutari - we had found out a boat but it failed to reach its exact destination However, we took a tram from the place where we were landed, and returned to our quarters at the hotel at Stamboul The Museum at Stamboul is situated where the ancient harem of the Greek Emperors once stood We saw some remarkable sarcophagi and other things, and had a charming view of the city from above Tophaneh I enjoyed taking fried chick peas here after such a long time, and had spiced rice and some other dishes, prepared in the Turkish fashion After visiting the cemetery, we went to see the ancient walls. Within the walls was the prison - a dreadful place. Next we met Woods Pasha and started for the Bosphorus We had our dinner with the French Charge d' Affairs and met a Greek

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and the Parthenon, etc. The temple is made of white marble. Some standing remains of columns also we saw. The next day, we again went to see these with Madamoiselle Melcarvi, who explained to us various historical facts relating thereto. On the second day, we visited the temple of Olympian Zeus, Theatre Dionysius etc., as far as the seashore. The third day, we set out for Eleusis, which was the chief religious seat of the Greeks. Here it was that the famous Eleusinian Mysteries used to be played. The ancient theatre of this place has been built anew by a rich Greek. The Olympian games too have been revived in the present times. At 10 A. M. on the fourth day, we got on board the Russian Steamer, *Czar*, bound for Egypt. After reaching the deck, we came to learn that the steamer was to start at 4 P. M. – perhaps, we were too early or there would be some extra delay in loading the cargo. So having no other alternative we went round and made a cursory acquaintance with the sculpture of Ageladas and his three pupils, Phidias, Myron and Polycletus, who flourished between 576 B. C. and 486 B. C. Even here, we began to feel the great heat. No ice was available in this steamer. From a visit to the Louvre Museum in Paris, I came to understand the three stages of Greek art.

Paris: 14-10-1900 - We shall leave Paris for Vienna on the 29th.

Port Tewfick: 26-11-1900 - The steamer was late, so I am waiting. Thank goodness, it entered the canal this morning at Port Said. That means it will arrive some time in the evening if everything goes right.

CHAPTER X
THE LAST DAYS

Left India (24-6-1899)

Belur Math 11-12-1900 – I arrived night before last. Alas! my hurrying was of no use. Poor Captain Sevier has passed away, a few days ago, thus two Great Englishmen gave up their lives for us, the Hindus This is martyrdom if anything is.

He was cremated on the banks of the river that flows by his Ashrama, *a la* Hindu, covered with garlands, the Brahmins carrying the body and boys chanting the Vedas

Dear Mrs. Sevier is calm I am going up tomorrow to pay her a visit.

15-12-1900 – Three days ago, I reached here. It was quite unexpected, and everybody was so surprised

26-12-1900 – I am going to Mayavati tomorrow

Mayavati: 6-1-1901 – The first day's touch of Calcutta brought the asthma back, and every night I used to get a fit during the two weeks I was there I am however very well in the Himalayas

It is snowing heavily here, and I was caught in a blizzard on the way; but, it is not very cold, all this exposure to the snows for two days on my way here seems to have do

uphill about a mile.

s deep, the sun

is bright and glorious, and now in the middle of the ... we are sitting outside reading, and the snow all about ... The winter here is very mild in spite of the snow ... air is dry and balmy, and the water beyond all praise.

Belur Math · 26-1-1901 – I went to see ... Sevier in Mayavati. On my way, I learned of the sudden death of the Raja of Khetri. It appears he was restoring some old architectural monument at Agra, at his own expense, and was up some tower on inspection. Part of the tower came down, and he was instantly killed.

Dacca 29-3-1901 – My mother, aunt and cousin came over five days ago to Dacca, as there was a great sacred bath in the Brahmaputra river. Whenever a particular conjunction of planets takes place, which is very rare, a huge concourse of people gather on the river at a particular spot. This year, there has been more than a hundred thousand people, for miles the river was covered with boats.

The river, though nearly a mile broad at the place, was one mass of mud! But, it was firm enough, so we had our bath and puja and all that.

I am rather enjoying Dacca. I am going to take my mother and other ladies to Chandranath, a holy place at the eastern - most corner of Bengal.

I liked East Bengal on the whole. The fields, I saw, were rich in crops, the climate also is good, and the scenery on the hill-side is charming. The Brahmaputra valley is incomparable in beauty. The people of East

Bengal are a little stronger and more active than those of this (West Bengal). It may be due to their taking plenty of fish and meat. Whatever they do, they do with great persistence. They use a good deal of oil and fat in their food, which is not good, because taking too much oily and fatty good produces fat in the body

About religious ideas, I noticed the people are very conservative, and many have turned into fanatics in trying to be liberal in religion. One day, a young man brought to me in the house of Mohinini Babu at Dacca a photograph and said, "Sir, please tell me who he is Is he an Avatara?" I told him gently many times that I knew nothing of it, when even on my telling him three or four times, the boy did not cease from his persistent questioning, I was constrained to say at last, "My boy, henceforth take a little nutritious food and then your brain will develop. Without nourishing food, I see your brain has become dried up." At these words, the young man may have been very much displeased But, what could I do? Unless I spoke like this to the boys, they would turn into madcaps by degrees.

People may call their Guru an Avatara, they may have any idea of him they like But, Incarnations of God are not born anywhere and at all seasons At Dacca itself, I heard there were three or four Avataras!

The women are very nearly the same everywhere I found Vaishnavism strong at Dacca

Going so far, I could not return without visiting the birthplace of such a great soul as Nag Mahashaya His

wife fed me with many delicacies prepared with her o
hand The house is charming, like a peace retre
There I took a swimming bath in a village pond Af
that, I had such a sound sleep that I woke at half pa
two in the afternoon Of the few days, I had sound sle
in my life, that in Nag Mahashaya's house was on
Rising from sleep, I had a plentiful repast. Nag Mah
shaya's wife presented me a cloth which I tied round m
head as a turban and started for Dacca I found that th
photograph of Nag Mahashaya was being worshippe
there The place where his remains lie interred ought t
be well kept. Even now it is not as it should be.

Even while living the life of a householder, Na
Mahashaya was more than a Sannyasin. This is ver
uncommon; I have rarely seen one like him

Decidedly, without a shadow of doubt, Nag Maha-
shaya was the living personification of humility in the
play of Sri Ramakrishna's divine drama on earth ..Sri
Ramakrishna used to speak of Nag Mahashaya as a
"flaming fire."

All the characteristics of the highest type of Bhakti
spoken of in the scriptures have manifested themselves
in Nag Mahashaya. It is only in him that we actually see
fulfilled the widely quoted text.

तृणादपि सुनीचेन तरोरपि सहिष्णुना ।
अमानिना मानदेन कीर्तनीयः सदाहरिः ॥

Blessed indeed is East Bengal to have been hallowed by
the touch of Nag Mahashaya's feet !

How can ordinary people appreciate a great man like
ompany are blessed indeed.

The land that has produced a great soul like Nag Mahashaya is blessed and has a hopeful future. By the light of his personality, Eastern Bengal is radiant.

There in East Bengal, they used to make such fuss about my food and say, "Why should you eat that food or eat from the hands of such and such?" – and so on To which I had to reply - "I am a Sannyasin and a mendicant friar and what need have I to observe so much outward formality with regard to food etc Do not your scriptures say – "चरेन्माधुकरीं वृत्तिमपि म्लेच्छकुलादपि" "One should beg one's food from door to door, aye even from the house of an outcaste "

The Shillong hills are very beautiful There I met Sir Henry Cotton, the Chief Commissioner of Assam He asked me, "Swamiji, after travelling through Europe and America, what have you come to see here in these distant hills?" Such a good and kind-hearted man as Sir Henry Cotton is rarely found Hearing of my illness, he sent the Civil Surgeon and inquired after my health morning and evening. I could not do much lecturing there, because my health was very bad On the way Nitai served and looked after me nicely

Kamakhya is the land of the Tantras I heard of one "Hankar" Deva who is worshipped there as an Avatara. I heard his sect is very widespread I could not ascertain if "Hankar" Deva was but another form of the name of Sankaracharya. They are monks – perhaps, Tantrika Sannyasins Or perhaps, one of the Sankara sects.

Math: 15-5-1901 – I have just returned from my

went through East Bengal and Assam. As usual, I a[m] quite tired and broken down.

Belur Math, 14-6-1901 - At Shillong, the [h]ill sanatorium of Assam, I had fever, Asthma, increase of albumen, and my body swelled to almost twice its normal size. These symptoms subsided, however, as soon as I reached the Math. It is dreadfully hot this year, but a bit of rain has commenced, and I hope we will soon have the monsoon in full force. I have no plans just now except that the Bombay Presidency wants me so urgently that I think of going there soon.

Belur Math 5-7-1901 - My health has been and is very bad. I recover for a few days only; then comes the inevitable relapse. Well, this is the nature of the disease anyway.

Assam is, next to Kashmir, the most beautiful country in India, but very unhealthy. The huge Brahmaputra winding in and out of mountains and hills, studded with Islands, is, of course, worth one's while to see.

Belur Math,: 27-8-1901 - My health is getting worse, in fact everyday...

I am in a sense a retired man, I don't keep much note of what is going on about the Movement.

Belur Math, · 7-9-01 - It has been raining here day and night last three days. Two of our cows have calved.

Well, about the rains - they have come down now in right earnest and it is a deluge, pouring, pouring night and

day The river is rising, flooding the banks, the po
and tanks have overflown I have just now returned f
lending a hand in cutting a deep drain to take off
water from the Math grounds The rain water stand
places some feet high My huge stork is full of glee
so are the the ducks and geese. My tame *antelope*
from the Math and gave us some days of anxiety
finding him out One of my ducks unfortunately
yesterday. She had been gasping for breath more tha
week. One of my waggish monks says, "Sir, it is no
living in this Kaliyuga when ducks catch *cold from* d
and rain, and frogs sneeze!"

One of the geese was losing her feathers Know
no other method, I left her some minutes in a tu
water mixed with mild carbolic, so that it might e
kill or heal - and she is all right now.

¹ *Belur Math 8-11-1901* - I have been ever sinc
trip to East Bengal almost bed-ridden Now I am w
than ever with the additional disadvantage of impa
eyesight.

Banaras Cantonment 10-2-1902 - Mr Oka
(of Japan) has started on his short tour A *very*
educated rich young man of Banaras, with whose fa
we had a long standing friendship, came back to this
yesterday He is especially interested in art, and spe
purposely a lot of money in his attempts to revive
Indian arts. He came to see me only a *few hours*
Mr Okakura left.

He is just the man to show him artistic India

what little is left) and I am sure he will be much benefited by Okakura's suggestions. Okakura just found a common terracotta water-vessel here used by the servants. The shape and the embossed work on it simply charmed him, but as it is common earthenware and would not bear the journey he left a request with me to have it reproduced in brass I was at my wit's end as to what to do My young friend comes a few hours after and not only undertakes to have it done, but offers to show a few hundreds of embossed designs in terracotta infinitely superior to the one Okakura fancied He also offers to show old paintings in that wonderful style Only one family is left in Banaras who can paint after the old style yet One of them has painted a whole hunting scene on a pea, perfect in detail and action!

I may shift from this place very soon

Banaras Cantonment 18-2-1902 - If in this hell of a world one can bring a little joy and peace even for a day into the heart of a single person, that much alone is true; this I have learnt after suffering all my life, all else is mere moonshine

Belur Math. 21-4-1902 - The plan of going to Japan seems to have come to nought.

Belur Math 21-4-1902 - I am getting on splendidly, they say, but yet very weak and no water to drink Anyhow the chemical analysis shows a great improvement. The swelling about the feet, and other complaints have all disappeared.

Belur Math · 15-5-1902 - I am somewhat better,

but, of course, far from what I expected A great idea of quiet has come upon me I am going to retire for good-no more work for me

If ever a man found the vanity of things, I have it now .....This is the world, hideous beastly corpse Who thinks of helping it is a fool! But we have to work out our slavery by doing good or evil I have worked it out, I hope. May the Lord take me to the other shore!

To set the work going, I had to touch money and property, for a time Now I am sure my part of the work [illegible]

Even its religious utility is beginning to pall me May Mother gather me soon to Herself never to come back any more!

I have given up the bondage of iron, the family tie I am not to take up the golden chain of religious brotherhood! I am free, must always be free, I am as good as retired I have played my part in the world

I had a message from India to the West, and boldly I gave it to the American and English peoples.

I have worked my best If there is any seed of truth in it, it will come to life. I am satisfied in my conscience that I did not remain an idle Swami I have a notebook which has travelled with me all over the world I find these words written seven years ago-"Now to seek a corner and lay myself there to die!" Yet, all this Karma remained.

Through Maya all this doing good etc. came into my brain - now they are leaving me. I long. Oh, I long for my rags, my shaven head, my sleep under the trees and my food from begging! Never before in my life I realised more forcibly the vanity of the world

I have roused a good many of our people, that was ill I wanted Let things have their course and Karma its ‹ay I have no bonds here I have seen life and it is all elf - life is for self, love for self, honour for self, everyhing for self. I look back and scarcely find any action I ave done for self, even my wicked deeds were not for :lf. So I am content ... I have seen the truth - let ie body float up or down, who cares?

Oh, the grief! If I could get two or three like me, I iuld have left the world convulsed.

It may be that I shall find it good to get outside of › body - to cast it off like a disused garment. But, I shall t cease to work! I shall inspire men everywhere.

It seems there is no more strength left to bear the :den of work and responsibility Rest and peace for few days that I shall yet live. Victory to the Guru! :tory to the Guru! No more lectures or anything of t sort. Peace!

Let me die a true Sannyasin, as my Master did, dless of money, of women, and of fame!

that the work done by me is not the work of Vivekadanda, it is His work—Lord's own work! If one Governor-General retires, another is sure to be sent in his place by the Emperor.

"As the birds which have slept in the branches of a tree wake up, singing when the dawn comes, and soar up into the deep blue sky, so is the end of my life."

I have had many difficulties, and also some very great successes But all my difficulties and sufferings count for nothing, as I have succeeded I have attained my aim I have found the pearl for which I dived into the ocean of life, I have been rewarded I am pleased. . .

I see the cloud lifting, vanishing, the cloud of my bad Karma, and the sun of my good karma rises, shining, beautiful and powerful.

I think I am beginning to see the Divine, I think I am slowly approaching that state when I shall be able to love the very "Devil" himself, if there were any.

At twenty years of age, I was the most unsympathetic, uncompromising fanatic; I would not walk on the footpath, on the theatre side of the streets in Calcutta At thirtythree, I could live in the same house with prostitutes and never would think of saying a word of reproach to them [illegible]

[illegible]

thing and embrace everything, and I do see that evil is a delusion. I bless the day I was born. That Love Infinite

that brought me into being has guarded every one of my actions good or bad, for what am I, what was I ever, but *a tool in His hands?* for whose service I have given up *everything*, my beloved ones, my joys He is my playful darling, I am His playfellow.

There is neither rhyme nor reason in the universe! What reason binds Him? He the playful One is playing these tears and laughters over all parts of the play! Great fun, great fun.

It is a funny world, - and the funniest chap you ever saw is, He - the Beloved Infinite! Fun, is it not? Brotherhood or playmatehood - a school of romping children let out to play in this playground of the world! Isn't it? Whom to praise, whom to blame, it is all His play. They want explanations, but how can you explain Him? *He is brainless*, nor has He any reason. He is fooling us *with little* brains and reason, but this time He won't find me napping

Beyond, beyond reason and learning and talking is the [illegible] "Saki"* fill u[illegible]

I am more calm and quiet now than I ever was. My boat is nearing the calm harbour from which it is never more to be driven out. Glory, glory unto Mother! I have no wish, no ambition now. Blessed be *Mother!* I am the servant of Ramakrishna. *I am merely a machine* I know nothing else. *Nor do I want to know. Glory*, glory unto Sri Guru!

* A Persian word for a wine-cup bearer

such, must break sooner or later... Life is but a dream! I am attaining peace that passeth understanding, which is neither joy nor sorrow, but something above them both.. Now I am nearing that *Peace*, the eternal silence. I preached the theory (of Vedantism) so long, but Oh Joy! I am realising it now Yes, I am. "I am free" "Alone, alone, I am the One without a second."

As the dawn heralds the rising sun, so unselfishness, purity righteousness precede the advent of God

– Sri RAMAKRISHNA

The blissful winds are sweet to us
The seas are showering bliss on us,
May the corn in our fields bring bliss to us
May the plants and herbs bring bliss to us,
May the cattle give us bliss,
O, Father in Heaven, be Thou blissful unto us!

– SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

– ३१

I come, Mother, I come, In Thy warm bosom.

I feel freedom is near at hand.

I am the infinite blue sky; the clouds may gather ov me, but I am the same infinite blue.

These tinpots of bones and foolish dreams of happ ness and misery - what are they?

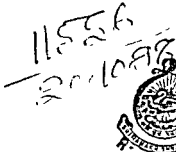
My dreams are breaking. *Om Tat Sat!*

Black and thick are the folds of sinister fate But, I am the master I raise my hand, and lo, they vanish! All this is nonsense and fear I am the Fear of fear, the Terror of terror. I am the fearless secondless One I am he Ruler of Destiny, the Wiper - out of fate Sri Wah Guru!

All is good! Nonsense Some good, some evil I njoy the good and I enjoy the evil I was Jesus and was Judas Iscariot; both my play, my fun All is ood!... Come good, come evil, both welcome, both of ou my play. I have no good to attain, no ideal to ench up to, no ambition to fulfil I, the diamond ine, am playing with pebbles, good and evil, good for u, evil, come, good for you, good, you come too. the universe tumbles round my ears, what is that me? I am Peace that passeth understanding I am yond, I am Peace!

I am being lifted up above the pestilential miasma of s world's joys and sorrows, they are losing their aning It is a land of dreams; it does not matter whe- r one enjoys or weeps; they are but dreams, and as

Alterations to be Noted

Page	Line	For	Read
2 Preface	9	Mentioning	Maintaining
4	4	These portions	Those portions
4	23	practice	practise
5	26	But God-head	about Godhead
6	25	now then	now and then
9	6	the God's will	God's will
10	12	lectures	lecturers
11	9	a woman Sannyasini or ascetic	a Sannyasini or lady asc
14	28	burnt listening	burnt in listening
18	17	conclusions	conclusion
27	14	mad with Him	mad to get Him
29	11	lest that I should	lest I should
29	23 & 27	Ananda	Annada
35	32	How I was	Now I was
37	2	prostrated	I prostrated
38	8	and said	he said
38	14	how he loved another	how to love another
38	16	It is possible	It is impossible
39	10	practice	practise
42	19	Dec. 23 1885	4th January, 1886
49	18	different treatment	different people requ different treatment
53	14 & 15	and ordinary man	any ordinary man
53	25	allen one word	fallen one word
54	10	that has done ?	that he has done ?
54	13	have understood	has understood
54	14	religion wave	religious wave
56	15	recivified	rev vif'ed
61	9	h as temple priest	as a temple priest
69	1 & 2	some alter fame, some after salvation and going to heaven	some after name, fa money or going to h

The wavy waters in the picture are symbolic of Karma, the lotus of Bhakti and the rising sun, of Jnana The encircling serpent is indicative of Yoga and the awakened Kundalini Shakti, while the swan in the picture stands for the Paramatman Therefore, the idea of the picture is that by the union of Karma, Jnana, Bhakti and Yoga, the vision of the Paramatman is obtained.

fm.

257	24	prevent the Hinds	prevent the Hindus
259	13	better of rag	better piece of rag
259	27	there religion	their religion
260	5	these	these people
261	3	for years	four years
261	5	who come	who came
266	23	whose powersin it	whose power is it
279	5	crature	creature
282	5	infections	infectious
282	21	yet	yes
285	16	as	as soon as
285	21	come back	came back
285	22	go fo France	go to France
291	25	At the Chicago Parlia-ment the influence of the Roman Catholics	At the Chicago Parliar the Roman Catholics
294	6	are still in	are still seen in
294	18	Dhatu garbha in small case	Dhatu garbha, small c
294	19	used	were used
294	20	hones	bones
302	foot-notes 2nd part 1st line	soul	soil
304	26	also in good	also is good
310	2,3	comcom	common

77	30	hedged a round	hedged round
85	2	as best	as best as
97	13	Albhedananda	Abhedananda
32	2	world	word
32	3	I hold that Upanishad	I hold Upanishad
35	10	treated	treated, reformed and sent back as useful members of society, how grand,
40	3	our parents	our parents, when they are present
41	15	very day	every day
71	8	Bangleys	Bagleys
75	17	root our	root out
77	29	Plamer	Palmer
10	2	by back	my back
30	14	and another topic	and other topics
32	5	England to a attack	England to attack
24	26	awfully	awfully so
3	1 & 2	am hoping	I am hoping
3	29	confess it	I confess it
1	29	invitation	initiation
3	19	already	already delivered
6	8	dose not	does not
8	21	America cities	American cities
3	27,28	by their alone	by these alone
0	17	literatures	lectures
0	25	sickness the time	sickness this time
5	12	pounds sufficient	pounds were sufficient
7	28	his his head	his head
45	25,26	Krishtopal	Krishna Lal
46	2	everyting	everything
48	9	it my be	it may be
255	16	कियनत	कियन
255	21	I was	It was
255		few days	a f... days